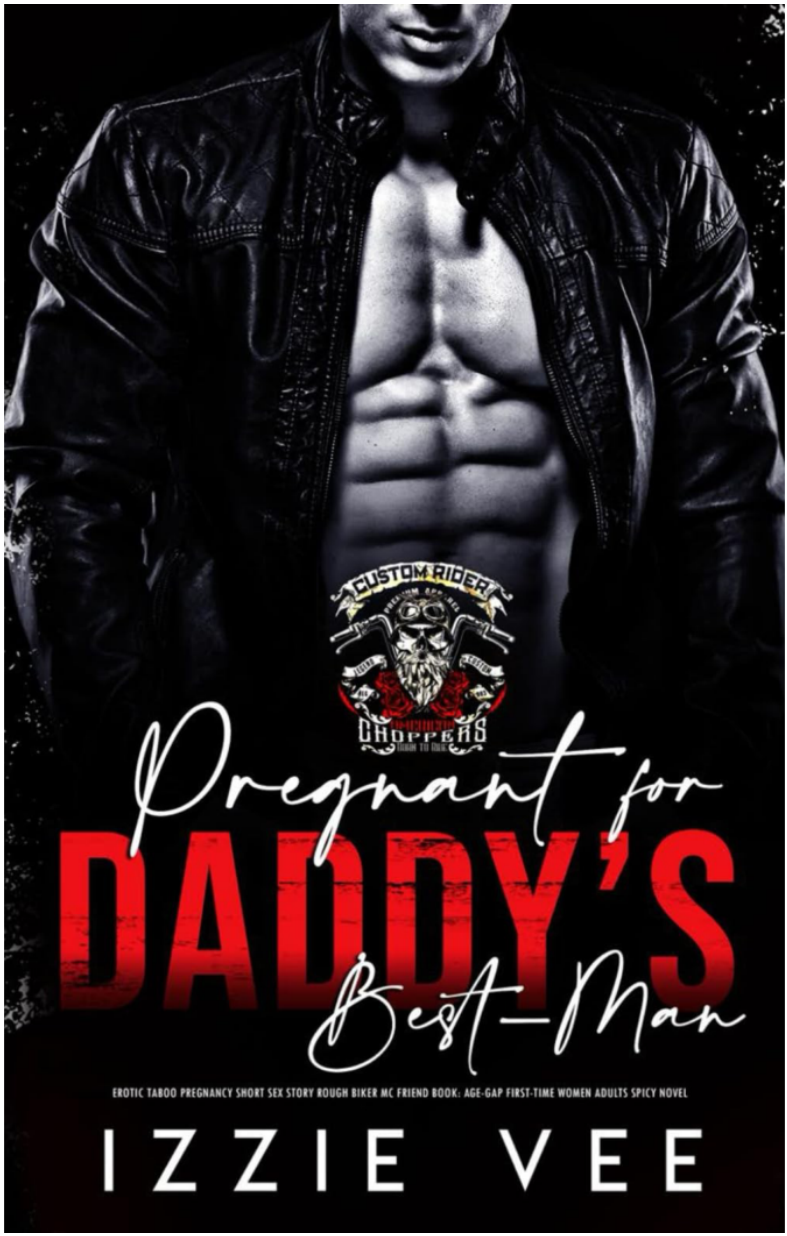

CUSTOM RIDER
CHOPPERS
Pregnant for
DADDY'S
Best—Man
EROTIC TABOO PREGNANCY SHORT SEX STORY ROUGH BIKER MC FRIEND BOOK: AGE-GAP FIRST-TIME WOMEN ADULTS SPICY NOVEL
IZZIE VEE

Pregnant for Daddy's Best-Man: Erotic Taboo Pregnancy Short Sex Story

Rough Biker MC Friend Book: Age-Gap First-Time Women Adults Spicy Novel

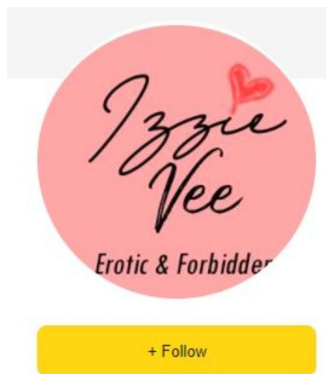
Steamy, Forced & Forbidden Romance

IZZIE VEE

Copyright © 2023 by Izzie Vee
All rights reserved.
This book is licensed for your personal enjoyment only, this book may not be resold.
No parts of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.
All characters in this book are fictious and figments of the author's imagination.
Cover Design by Izzie Vee
Cover Photo by VitalikRadko on Depositphotos.com

Important Readers' Note

Happy greetings!
Go follow me on Amazon with only 2 quick clicks. CLICK **THE FOLLOW BUTTON** below to be notified about my hot new releases weekly. Then it'll take you to my Amazon's author page, where *you'll need to click the follow button on amazon's site as well*. It's that simple! Two quick seconds and you're all done!



Thanks for joining and be ready to be notified about the hottest releases sent straight to your inbox. Cheers!

Table of Content

Pregnant for Daddy's Best Man
Important Readers' Note
Chapter 1
Chapter 2
Chapter 3
Chapter 4
Chapter 5
Chapter 6
Chapter 7
Chapter 8
Chapter 9
Chapter 10
Chapter 11
Chapter 12
Chapter 13
Chapter 14
Chapter 15
Chapter 16
Chapter 17
Chapter 18

Epilogue

Chapter 1

Hayley

"Cecilia is officially moving in this evening. I'll be at work, but I want you to help her with whatever she needs," my dad said, his gaze fixed on the road as we drove.

"Sure thing. Speaking of moving, I should look for a place soon … college graduate and all."

The car came to a halt that was so out of place I lunged forward, only stopping thanks to the seatbelt strapped around me. I gasped, my head snapping towards my dad, who wore a deep frown.

"What was that about?" I asked breathlessly.

"Why would you consider moving? The house is big enough for everyone," he said as if the idea repulsed him. "You don't need to rush."

I shook my head to clear it from the

sudden stop. “Dad, you can’t expect me to live with you forever. I’m twenty-one years old.”

“I’m well aware of that, but it makes no sense to pay more bills when you could be saving up a bit more – to make sure it’s seamless and easy when you do move out. You have access to everything you need, and you have your own car,” he listed. “You have privacy, I treat you like an adult, but rent and utilities are a lot to handle when you’re just starting out.”

I pulled in a breath and raked my fingers through my hair. “I know, but I’m an adult now. I want to be independent. To have a place of my own.”

He shook his head, waving his hand to dismiss me. “You’re my only child – my only family, except for Cecilia. Is there something wrong with having a stepmom?”

“No,” I said slowly.

“Then I don’t see why you’re so eager to leave home. The closer we are, the better,” he said as he started back up the car and continued driving.

I opened my mouth in response but

clamped it shut, knowing nothing I said would make my dad see my side of things. This talk about my independence had been a constant one even before I started college, but I was always met with the same ‘no’ and plenty of logical reasons to back it up. He was right, though, I was all he had and vice versa. It had been that way for most of my life.

Sometimes, I craved the freedom to explore the world, all the good and bad, but then my dad came along and stomped on those dreams. The world was dangerous, he said. There were people out there just waiting to take advantage, and it was better to stay in our little town where the only crime was the lack of fashion, and the most exciting thing was karaoke at the diner in town.

It was almost depressing; I’d thought that choosing a college out of the state of Oregon would be a blessing, but my dad came along and convinced me yet again to stay close to home. Now, here I was, years later and still confined to a small town where nothing changed, and everyone stayed because they didn’t want to leave a ‘perfect’ place.

I longed for adventure and hoped that

Dad's marriage to Cecelia would lighten his hold on me. Maybe having someone to live with, love and be with would mean I could start to discover who I was alone.

**

Later that day, Cecilia came over, a bright smile on her face. I managed a smile as I went outside to help her with whatever she needed – my father's words.

"Hi there," I said, waving as she pulled her suitcases from the back of her jeep.

Her smile broadened when she saw me, the suitcase almost falling from her hand as she tried to wave back.

"Hi, Hayley," she giggled at her clumsiness. "Your dad told me you'd be here. I'm glad." She placed her hands on her hips as she panted, then wiped her brow. "I wish I was stronger."

I hastened to help her, grabbing the suitcase from the back seat and pulling it into my arms. I immediately understood her struggle.

“Damn, are you hiding a dead body in here?” I joked, laughing.

She laughed. “I er – I wanted to cram as much as I could to avoid too many suitcases and boxes.”

I nodded, helping her to place the other items on the floor. Once we had it all on the ground, I realized the hard part was left, dragging everything into the house.

“I wish your dad were here to help us, but I’m glad you’re here. We haven’t really had the time to catch up, have we?” she smiled at me, her green eyes sparkling.

“Yeah, that’s true.”

“I mean, you were always here, but we haven’t really had a one-on-one, have we? Your father was always here, and well, we haven’t really had girl talk.”

I raised a brow, trying to maintain my smile. “I guess.”

She paused and released a sigh, meeting my gaze. “I really want us to be friends, Hayley. I know it has been you and your father for the longest while, and I don’t want to ruin that. I love your dad very much, and I

don’t want to make you a third wheel or become one myself.”

“Yeah, I know you do, and a friendship sounds good,” I answered, not sure what else to say.

Her cheeks warmed with a blush. “Great. I know that my being here will be kinda awkward at first, but I promise not to invade.”

We pulled the suitcases to the house. “It’s fine. I’m just still curious why you didn’t move in earlier.”

“I promised myself I’d never move in with a man until I was married, and well, technically, Hank and I aren’t married yet, but after the wedding, we’ll be heading to the Caribbean for our honeymoon, so this seemed like the best time.” She shrugged.

“I get it, but what if you don’t like living with my dad. Doesn’t it make more sense to live with the person first before deciding to marry them?”

She twisted her mouth a little and then looked to the ceiling. “I think we’ve seen enough of each other in our homes to cover

that."

I only smiled, allowing Cecilia to lead the way to get the rest of her things. She was bright and bubbly – more so than me. Although she was just thirty-four, there was always this look of joy and excitement in her bright green eyes. Heck, even her ponytail seemed full of life as it bounced, golden in the sun, on her back.

Sometimes, I wondered how she and my dad even worked out, seeing they were complete opposites. She was a ray of sunshine, and my dad was like an overcast day. But she made him happy. It was like he softened in her presence, and I couldn't question that. He deserved happiness. Maybe she'd convince him to give me more freedom, too.

"Your dad's best man is coming tonight for his bachelor party. I was hoping he'd come earlier, so I could get to know him a bit, but your dad says he's a good guy."

My heart fluttered a little, my mind placing a face to her words. "Yeah, Levi."

"Your dad said they'd been friends since college, and he'd be the perfect person to have

by his side," she continues.

"Yeah, they're pretty close, but Levi moved to New York a long time ago. I've only seen him a few times, but Dad says they talk all the time," I informed.

"So he tells me."

We stood in an awkward silence. I was trying not to think about Levi, and I was sure she tried to picture him. A second later, she shook her head.

"I'm just so excited for tomorrow," she squealed, clapping her hands together and looking around the house. "My girls and I are going out tonight, too – you should come. It'd be like a post-graduation celebration for you, too."

I scratched the nape of my neck. "I er – I'm sorry, but I wouldn't want it to be awkward for your friends. They don't even know me – I don't want to be the odd one out."

She fanned me off playfully with a scoff. "Oh, please. I promise it'll be fun. Just don't tell your dad about the naughty things we do."

My brow perked up before she burst out

laughing, the sound echoing through the halls. “You should see your face! I’m just joking, silly.”

I sighed. Well, wasn’t she just a ball of energy? I wasn’t sure I had it in me to keep up with her.

As Cecilia continued with her tasks, my mind wavered to what she’d said. Levi would be here tonight, and I didn’t know if I was supposed to jump in excitement or find a way to manage my racing pulse. Levi had been my crush for longer than I could remember, and everyone knew it. However, no one knew that it had passed the innocence stage and had transcended into something more.

At twenty-one, it was no longer hearts drawn around a name, it was pure, unbridled lust.

Chapter 2

Hayley

Later that evening, I was sending out online job applications when my phone started to ring. Without even answering, I knew it was my dad because he was the only one who didn't text before calling.

I picked up the phone as soon as I finished an application, putting it to my ear as I took the call.

"Hey, Dad," I answered, curling up my feet on the bed.

"Hey, sweetheart. I'm a bit caught up here at work. I'll need you to pick up Levi from the airport for me."

My body grew tense, heat rising to my cheeks. "What?"

"I'd ask Cee, but she must be exhausted from the moving; plus, she has her thing with the girls tonight."

I resisted the urge to tell him I was

going too. Staying out with her and her friends – assuming they were as energetic as her – would be worse. “Can’t he take an Uber here?”

“Come on, Hayley. He’s travelling all this way to be here for my wedding. The least I can do is have someone pick him up from the airport,” he said.

I felt a little guilty and more than a little selfish. “I guess you’re right. I’ll do it.”

“That’s my girl. If you leave now, you’ll get there on time. I’ll be home before you.”

I huffed out a breath when the call ended, a million thoughts running through my head while my stomach stirred a dangerous cocktail of nerves.

I was happy I’d taken a bath earlier, so I didn’t have to rush. I looked down at my floral dress that almost touched my ankles and considered getting into something else. But that meant taking more time, and I shouldn’t be dressing up to get my dad’s best friend anyway.

Plus, Levi saw me as just “Hank’s daughter,” so did it matter at all? I couldn’t understand how I had a crush on a man like

that when I looked the way I did. Having Levi return even half of my lusty thoughts was a pipe dream. Yet I couldn't shake the way my body reacted to him, even if he was just brought up in conversation.

Apparently, a girl's first crush was hard to shake.

With a resigned sigh, I grabbed my purse and headed to the living room, where Cecilia was busy chatting on the phone. I planned on slipping out with just a simple wave of dismissal, but as soon as she saw me, she quickly ended the call and hastened towards me.

"Are you heading out?" she asked.

"Yeah, Dad asked me to pick up Levi from the airport."

Her eyes widened. "Oh, I would come with you, but I still have a ton of things to unpack, and I have to get ready for tonight… ugh, it's been a hell of a day." She rolled her eyes playfully before she smiled. "Actually, I could just put off-"

"No, it's okay," I insist. "Take your time moving in. It's no problem really. I should be

back soon anyway."

Her gaze swiftly roamed my attire. She didn't say anything, just gave me a soft smile that promised ... something. "Drive safely."

"Thanks," I said before I left the house and hopped into my car.

The entire drive to the airport was filled with thoughts of Levi when I wasn't grumbling about terrible drivers not knowing what they were doing.

But then thoughts of him would pop back up. Would he recognize me? Would things be as playful and easy as they had always been? Would he be annoyed with my dad for sending me instead? The last time I saw Levi was some years ago when he had visited for thanksgiving. Just the three of us, but I couldn't get the way he looked out of my head even if I wanted to. His leather jackets did it every time, how hot he'd looked on his motorcycle when he'd ridden it. I'd wanted so badly to hop on back then, but knew with my dad there I'd have a better chance expecting a blue moon. I developed a crush for biker's then and would read as many books as I could

about them, but there was only one I ever wanted and it was him.

It took some convincing to remind myself it didn't matter. I had a separate focus, one more important than the man I could never have. I wanted freedom. I'd get a taste of it when my dad and Cecilia went on their honeymoon, and I wanted to find a way to prove I could handle the world.

When I finally arrived, my stomach was in knots, and, despite the cool afternoon, I still managed to break a sweat. The airport was crowded, which didn't help with my anxiety, and my head was reeling, wondering if Levi would be out any second. My eyes searched the area, my lips caught painfully between my teeth, looking for signs of Levi.

He was a man who stood out in every aspect, and today I prayed that was the case. I stood there looking around for almost ten minutes, wondering if I should call my dad to get an update on what was happening.

But then a tall figure emerged through the crowd, towering over everyone as his eyes searched the crowd. I stood there frozen, my

lips parting as I stared at him. I continued to watch as he walked, a full sleeve of colorful tattoos on his left arm. His shoulders were broad, and I could see the power in his form with every step he took. People were looking at him as they passed, and I almost pitied them, seeing someone so perfect for half a second before he disappeared.

It seemed as if I was in a trance as I watched him, unable to even signal to him that I was there. There was so much to admire – so much that captivated me. His leather biker vest fitted him perfectly along with black denim jeans that snuggly contoured to his toned legs.

Finally, while I stood there, a little drool probably falling from my mouth, he straightened his head, and our gazes met. My heart lurched in my chest, and his eyes squinted as if he were trying to make out who I was.

I gave a very slight wave, hoping he'd remember or at least come closer.

That slight wondering scowl transformed into a bold, bright smile that had

my heart racing even faster. His brows raised a little, and then he waved with his carry-on still strapped over his shoulders.

When he moved closer, I finally remembered where I was and processed I was going to have to do more than just stare at the man when he arrived. Before I knew it, I was in Levi's arms, pressed against his broad chest, enveloped by the scent of his heady cologne.

My feet lifted off the ground, and a small squeak or wheeze left my throat. As he twirled me around, the smile tugged at my lips, and seconds later, I was laughing, clinging on to him and making the most of the minute.

"It's been so long since I saw you, Hayles," he said as he placed me on my feet.

My cheeks were so hot I was sure I was tomato-red, but I didn't exactly mind. I was just happy to see Levi.

"It's been ages. I'm surprised you even remembered such a place exists," I jabbed at him, smiling hard. "Did you need a map?"

He burst out a thunderous laugh that revealed straight, white teeth. "You've got

jokes, but it's true. I haven't exactly been the best friend."

"To me or to dad?" I couldn't help but ask.

"To you, of course. Your old man calls me almost every day. Doesn't seem like he can live without me."

"I don't believe that for a sec."

"I have a full call log to show," he said, raising a brow.

I grinned when Levi slung his arm around me, leading me out of the crowded place. He had no idea how his touch sunk deeper than my skin, how it ruined all my attempts to focus on my future other than him, but I played it cool, working hard to crush every lust-fueled thought.

"I thought he'd be here, too, but don't tell me… he's working, isn't he?" Levi said, interrupting my thoughts.

"Like always," I said, moving towards my car.

Levi scoffed. "I'm glad he's getting married; at least he'll have a reason to work less and live more."

“Yeah.”

He placed his bags around the back and then joined me in the front. For a second, I reoriented myself so I wouldn’t look like a new driver. I started the vehicle and glanced at him. He seemed cramped in the small car, his head almost grazing the roof, his shoulders almost touching mine despite the space.

“You don’t mind if we stop somewhere to eat, do you? I’m starving,” he said, trying to get comfortable.

“Oh, not at all. Have anywhere in mind?” I asked.

He shrugged. “Anywhere with a good burger and a cold beer.”

“I know just the place.”

It didn’t take us long to get there. We were seated at a small diner in fifteen minutes, Levi managing to catch some people’s attention as they looked from him and then to me. I understood, seeing me beside a man like Levi left plenty of questions. Was I his daughter, his niece, his girlfriend (laughable) or a friend? It’s the most mystery anyone in this small town had experienced in weeks.

Levi greeted a few people he'd known from back in the day, and after a bit, it was just us two again. He sat across from me, giving me a better view of his handsome face and staring at me with dazzling hazel eyes that weakened my knees. With this lighting, every green strand in his eyes burned, making him like some otherworldly king.

The little bit of stubble on his face, his dark hair, sharp jaw and even the little scar just above his eyebrow seemed perfect.

"Congrats on graduating college, by the way. I'm sorry I couldn't make it. I was on project in Rome at the time," he said.

I nodded. "Yeah, Dad told me, but thanks."

"You were always a smarty pants. It was no surprise hearing you were valedictorian," he continued anyway.

"I still can't believe I did that speech. Looking back, it was scary stuff," I admit, trying not to lose myself in the pride rolling off him.

His thick, dark brows furrowed. "What do you mean?"

“I’m not used to talking in front of a bunch of people. Doing that was pretty nerve-wracking. It’s still a miracle I didn’t faint on stage,” I joked.

A low chuckle drew from his throat. “I almost don’t believe it. Hank sent me the video; you crushed it.”

I started picking at my fingers. “I’m glad you think so.”

He pulled in a breath. “So, what’s the plan now – college graduate and all?” he grinned. “I’m shocked you’re still in Portland. I’d expected you to be travelling to celebrate, at least a party.”

I almost snorted but didn’t want to talk badly about my dad in front of Levi. “I don’t have many friends to party with.”

“I find that hard to believe.”

I giggled, looking at him. “I’m actually curious to know what version of me you had in your head all this time.”

The food came at that moment. We said thanks, and just as I glanced back to Levi, he was taking a hearty bite that filled out the corners of his stubbly cheeks. For a second, I

thought he'd forgotten my question, but when he swallowed, he met my gaze yet again.

"I've always thought of you as a shy girl, but I thought that college had helped you break out of your shell – it usually does."

"Well, Dad made sure to warn me that college was no joke and the only thing I should focus on was my studies. I took his advice," I picked the tomatoes from the burger and scolded myself for forgetting to tell them not to include them in the first place. "I had a roommate who I consider a friend, but she's somewhere in L.A."

Levi shook his head. "How about you come with me to the big city, have your fun, and then you decide what you want to do from there," he said so casually I was caught off guard by it.

My lips parted. "What?" as the words dawned on me, I couldn't help but laugh. "That's insane."

"How can you make a choice about your future if you don't know the options?" he asked, taking a sip of his coke. "An all-expenses paid trip to the big city. You can do

whatever you want, get whatever you want – it's all on me."

"Levi…"

"Consider it a graduation gift," he said simply. "Come on, Hayles, the only place you've ever been, is where your father lives. The world is big and beautiful, and you need to see it."

I nibbled my bottom lip. This was more than some fantasy getaway with the man of my dreams. This was everything I'd been craving, and it was offered up without strings, which made it too good to be true. Dad had warned me about things like that.

"Can I at least think about it?" I asked.

He raised a brow. "Will you actually think about it?"

"I will. My dad is a bit overprotective, but I could talk to him."

Levi scoffed. "I can't believe he's still like that after so many years. You're an adult now – what twenty-one?"

"Yeah, but my dad will always see me as a kid. He's become more and more overprotective each year. I know it's because

he loves me," I say, taking a breath before continuing. Before I can, I see Levi prepare to jump in.

"You aren't exactly making yourself happy in the process, are you, Hayley?" he observed, his tone firmer.

I cleared my throat. "Enough about me, what's happening with you? Still not married yet?"

"You know that's not in the books for me. Why have one when I can have whoever I want?" he raised a brow at that as if it were food for thought.

"Sure, I get that, but wouldn't you want to have a family – someone to go home to at night?" I quizzed. "Someone you know loves you, wants the best for you, is there to support you?"

His gaze wandered. "When you're on the road as often as me, there's a lot of things you're exposed to, a lot of things you'd want to give a shot right away without considering someone else. I want to live my life without feeling like I have anything holding me back."

I swallowed hard. "I guess."

"You don't have to follow every single rule. You don't have to go with the norm – it's usually boring anyway."

"I know, I just – I'd like to have my own little family someday."

Levi nodded understandably, his gaze soft. "And I have no doubt that you'll have exactly that. You're a good girl, Hayley."

The words nipped at my heartstrings. A good girl. The words couldn't stop repeating in my head. Men like Levi didn't *do* good girls. They wanted girls who were up for a good time and a good time alone. Girls like me got attached and fell in love. I wanted more than chance encounters.

I cleared my throat, shifting my gaze to the patch on his vest, wanting a change of topic.

"What's that about?" I asked, staring at the small circular image of a skull with wings attached. "Are you a part of a biker club now? – I read about those."

A small smile crept to his lips. "Yeah, *The Rebels,*" he informed before turning his back and exposing the full logo at the back of

his vest.

My brow perked up. “Wow, I missed that one. What’s it like?”

Levi pulled in a breath. “Well, it’s like being a part of a community with people who have similar interests. We ride together, we share experiences and so many other stuff, y’know. It’s like a family in a sense.”

“That’s cool.”

Levi was pretty cool. There wasn’t a single thing about him that wasn’t impressive. From the single piercing in his ear with silver earring of a circle then a cross attached, down to his shiny black boots.

I was still intrigued by him even though hearing how Levi spoke about not wanting one person or a family should have killed my crush right then. I wasn’t silly enough to think I could change him, so this could be a good thing, right? I didn’t have to get my heart involved. I could rule out even one night with him, one moment of weakness, because it would end in heartbreak. He’d said I was smart, so I wouldn’t run into a situation knowing it would hurt me. And I couldn’t just

give someone half of me. It was all or nothing.

After all, I was a good girl.

Chapter 3

Hayley

When we returned to the house, Dad was there, standing at the door with a huge smile on his face – I couldn't remember the last time I saw him so excited. Levi got out, and I watched from behind as they shared a hug.

"I'm glad you're here," he said, patting Levi on the back.

"Me too. I wouldn't miss this for anything. It's not every day an old man like you gets married," Levi joked, glancing back at me as if he wanted to remind me he knew I was still there.

I couldn't help but blush.

"Well, it's full time you took a page from my book, don't you think?"

"I'll leave all the family stuff to you," he said, stopping short when Cecilia made an appearance.

I walked up towards them, noting the polite look Levi had on his face as he greeted her. I watched to the side as if I were watching a movie and utterly uninvolved.

"Cecilia, nice to finally meet you – I've heard great things," Levi said, extending a hand.

Cecilia wore a smile ear-to-ear, her cheeks flushed from blushing. "Likewise, it's nice to finally meet you, too."

We all went inside after the greetings. My dad, Cecilia, and Levi sat in the living room while I went to the kitchen. I didn't feel like I was the same level of adult as them. So, I made myself useful. I carried a pitcher of fruit punch to serve everyone. Levi had a pleasant smile on his face as he watched me, but the heat of his gaze was enough to make me self-conscious. The offer he'd made me still weighed on my shoulders.

"So, when's the party hitting the road? It's almost dark out," Levi said, glancing at the open windows.

"What party?" my dad asked as if he genuinely had no idea what Levi was talking

about.

"Come on, man, we might be in our forties, but a bachelor party is a must."

Dad rubbed the nape of his neck. "It wasn't on the agenda for me."

"It is now. I'm sure Cecilia here's going out with her girls," he said, glancing at Cecilia, whose mouth opened immediately in response.

"Well, yes, but we all know Hank here isn't the type to party," she said with a shaky laugh.

"Right. I'm sorry Levi, maybe you can hang out somewhere in town tonight or something, but I still have to get some paperwork sorted before I even go on our honeymoon. I'm all caught up," Dad answered. "I want everything taken care of so I can focus on Cecilia."

Levi scoffed, dropping back in his chair. "You're an oral surgeon. What paperwork could you possibly have piled up?"

"You'd be surprised. I'll be gone for a week. I also need to rearrange my schedule."

Levi shook his head. "I can't believe

this."

"You know how I am. I'd rather work than party," Dad said, taking a sip of his drink.

"And you seem to be rubbing all that off on Hayley here." Levi motioned to me.

My heart skipped a beat at the mention of my name. I crossed my fingers, hoping that Levi didn't bring up our conversation – *all of it*, including the trip – right now.

I met his eyes and tried to force him to read my mind. He didn't even look my way.

"What?" Dad now asked, his brows furrowed.

"How'd you feel if I invited Hayley to New York with me?" he asked. I was more on edge than ever before, waiting almost painfully for a response from my dad.

I couldn't tell Levi to shut up or convey how frustrated I was with him. This was supposed to be *my* choice. I said I'd speak to my father! I knew how protective he was, and I could word it right.

Already, I could see the 'no' stamped on my dad's forehead.

“With you?” he said, a slight scowl on his face.

“Yeah, why the hell not?”

“Levi, I love and respect you, but I’m not sending my only daughter across the country with you,” he said matter-of-factly. My stomach dipped.

“I think it’s a great idea,” Cecilia chimed in.

Dad’s gaze flashed towards her, his frown deepening. “What?”

“Hayley is an adult now; I think she should get out more and enjoy herself,” Cecelia said.

It was weird hearing them talk about me as if I wasn’t in the room, but I was curious. I took a step towards the kitchen, anyway, not really wanting to be involved in this. If this were going to be Dad and Cecelia’s first fight, I didn’t need to witness it.

“That’s what I said,” Levi agreed.

Dad scoffed. “You’re not exactly the best influence, Levi, and you know it.”

“You really think I’d put Hayley in

harm's way?" He questioned, shocked.

"I'm done having this conversation. It isn't up for discussion," he said before he rose to his feet and left the room.

I tried my best to avoid Levi's gaze, but when I looked up, our eyes met. He raised a brow at me, and I sighed, a feeling of defeat creeping into my gut.

**

Later that night, I heard a car leaving the driveway and suspected it was Dad leaving for work. Soon after, a knock came at my door, I rose from my bed.

"It's me," the feminine voice came, and my heart slowed. Somehow, I'd expected it to be Levi. Stupid me. Cecilia spoke again. "Hayley?"

"Come in!" I called.

Cecilia made an appearance, a smile on her face as usual, but this time, she had a full face of makeup on and a sexy pink dress that skimmed her knees.

"You're leaving," I acknowledged.

“Yes, the girls are waiting for me in town.” She fiddled with her fingers, glancing down at my dress. “Are you sure you don’t want to come? I promise it’ll be fun.”

“Yeah. I’ll just stay in tonight. Have fun, though.”

She managed a tight smile. “Okay then; I guess I’ll see you tomorrow at the wedding.”

“Of course.”

With that, she left, leaving me with my thoughts, which was usually the only company I had anyway. Levi was just downstairs, and if I was brave enough – if I had the courage like the girls I read about in romance novels, then I’d walk to his guestroom, strip myself naked and being the hotblooded male I knew he was, he couldn’t resist.

But I wasn’t those girls – I was the good girl like Levi had said, and the thought of doing something so raunchy made my stomach boil with nervousness. I didn’t have it in me to take risks, and that’s how I knew my fantasies would remain exactly that.

He won’t change for me. He won’t want *me more than once*, I reminded myself. Plus, he

was my dad's best friend, nearly double my age. Jeeze, the whole list stretched in front of me. Everything I knew about sex was from books, and I had a feeling that wasn't enough to make me great in bed.

It was one night. I could stay in my room, avoid Levi, see him at the wedding, say goodbye and find another way to gain my freedom – one that didn't involve getting closer to the man I wasn't supposed to want.

I stayed in my room reading a book, afraid to even up on Levi. I was afraid of being alone with him. It was stupid, but I didn't trust myself. He'd turn me down, I'd cry, pout ... what if he told my dad?

Some time passed, and I still couldn't concentrate on what I was doing – more so what Levi was doing. There was no sound to indicate that he was inside the house, and for a second, I wondered if he was. Maybe he'd slipped out since I wasn't entertaining him and decided to find some excitement himself?

If he knew a place to find it here, I might have to ask for pointers.

A small knock came at the door in the

midst of my thoughts, and I froze with my book in hand, my gaze sealed on the door in front of me.

"Come in," I croaked.

The door slowly opened, Levi revealing himself a second later. He had changed out of the clothes he'd been in earlier and was now in black shorts and a black tank top. I took a second to take him in, noting that he had tattoos down his left leg, too – just like his arm. Yet the other half of him was bare. I wondered where the tattoos extended, where they cut off, and felt heat rising to my cheeks at the thought.

He looked as good as ever, his hair slightly messier than it had been earlier. His scent wafted through the air and captivated my sense of smell, reminding me of coziness and warmth that I wanted to be enveloped in.

"Ever considered getting out of your cave?" he asked, looking around my room.

"Only if I have a reason to," I said.

He smiled, waving me over, his smile warm. "Come on, let's go watch a movie or something."

My lips parted in surprise. “Wh- Here?”

“Yeah, you guys have Netflix, don’t you?”

I couldn’t help my laugh. “Of course, we do. We might be a bit behind time, but we have that,” I said, sliding from the bed, almost tripping over my long dress.

Levi didn’t seem to notice, or if he did, he was kind enough to pretend he didn’t. I walked past him, his manly scent just a little stronger the closer I got, but nevertheless, still mouth-watering. We went to the living room while I tried to remember I was angry with him. That was more important than him being gorgeous than being alone with him in a way that half my late-night fantasies had started. Levi left for the kitchen and later returned with two bottles of beer as he plopped down on the sofa, his hand outstretched to hand me one.

“Oh, I don’t drink,” I said.

“I wouldn’t even consider this drinking, but I respect it,” he said, placing the extra one on the coffee table and taking a swig of the other.

“Do you have a particular movie in mind?” I asked.

“Not really. You pick,” he encouraged, handing me the remote.

My stomach fluttered with a mix of excitement and nervousness. I selected an action movie and sat beside him on the sofa, knowing I could have opted for one of the single seats, but I didn’t want to make it awkward. After all, in any other situation, everyone would think it was okay for me to sit beside him. Heck, even Levi would probably find it strange if I did otherwise.

As soon as I sat there, I kicked myself. I shouldn’t be here. I knew my crush was stupid. I was just torturing myself with fantasies of him touching me, wanting me, seeing me as more than his best friend’s daughter. Hell, I could picture him turning my chin, kissing me, saying something smooth, then laying me back to kiss me and …

But these were just fantasies. *My* fantasies, which meant I needed to focus on something else. He’d brought up New York to my dad. He did it without telling me he

would. We'd agreed I'd think about it. He didn't want to settle down. He'd be gone in a few days.

"Are you going to pick?" Levi asked.

I scrolled through some of the movies, trying to turn off every thought in my head.

"I think I watched part one of this last year. I'm hoping this is just as good," he said, the sound of his voice catching me a little off guard.

"Er, yeah, one was definitely a hit. I loved it."

I glanced at him to see that pleasant look on his face. Levi usually wasn't the pleasant-looking type. He was intimidating and often had a small frown on his face, but I'd realized that his features always seemed to soften when he was around me or my dad. It was like getting a whole different side of him.

Just as I was getting comfortable, his phone rang, and I almost sighed in relief. I needed a break from whatever *this* moment was. He dug for it in his pockets, and a scowl formed on his face, making me wonder who it could be.

“Excuse me for a second,” he said sternly, leaving the room.

The conversation was slight, the sound of the television messing with the quality. I was curious enough to turn the TV down but had enough sense to know that Levi would realize I was eavesdropping.

From what I could tell, it wasn’t a conversation he wanted to have. His voice had gotten deeper and more thunderous. For some reason, it actually made him hotter.

No, no. He’s off-limits, and I’m angry with him.

“Don’t call me again,” he said as he reentered the room and ended the call. His lips were drawn in a thin line.

I swallowed and eased back on the sofa, watching Levi as he sat back down. His arm brushed against mine as he sat, and I had to bite down on my lips to prevent a gasp. I could have kicked myself, but the last thing I’d expected was to feel his skin against mine – though innocent. Levi didn’t seem to notice or mind in the slightest, but I realized he was closer to me now.

“Everything alright?” I asked after a moment of silence.

He glanced at me then, his hazel eyes locking with mine. He cleared his throat. “Yeah, totally fine.”

I knew it wasn’t, but I didn’t dare to press the issue. It was none of my business. So, I turned towards the TV, watching with my eyes, but my mind was elsewhere.

“Hey, do you know where I could get a motorcycle to rent around here?” he asked.

My brows shot up. “A motorcycle?”

“Yeah.”

“I er – there’s this place in town you could check.”

“How about we head there now,” he asked, his eyes sparkling a bit with excitement.

I almost laughed. “Now?”

“Why not? I wish I’d brought mine with me. I could really do with a ride right now.”

I pinned a few tendrils of my hair behind my hair and searched the floor as if it had the words for me to say. “They’re

probably locked now anyway."

He muttered something under his breath and turned his body to face mine. "How do you survive in this place?"

"You were born here; I'm sure you know a thing or two about it."

He chuckled. "Fair enough. But once I got out, I knew that was it for me."

I smiled. "Is this you trying to convince me of New York?"

"Nah, I can't force you to do anything you don't want to, Hayles."

"You say, after outing the plan to my dad," I said softly, not expecting him to hear.

"People think of every reason *not* to do something and talk themselves out of it to avoid being rejected. I thought he'd say yes if *I* asked. Then you could choose for yourself. I'm not going to force your hand one way or the other."

"What if I want to?" I asked.

"Then, what's stopping you?"

I swallowed. "You heard what Dad had to say about it earlier."

He focused on me entirely. “Why didn’t you say anything? You just sat there and allowed him to dictate.”

“I just – I don’t want to fight with him, and I don’t want to make him unhappy. I’ll likely stay here and make a life for myself just like he did. I’d be closer to him anyway.”

“If that’s what you want, fine. Having his permission doesn’t mean anything to me. You’re an adult, you make your choices.”

“Easier said than done,” I countered.

“I’ll stop pushing. I just … you don’t want to look back years from now and regret it,” he said, his brows raising a tad. “Life is too short not to live it the way you want to.”

His words hit home. Levi was simply talking about a trip that I’d enjoyed, but his words made me think of him. I didn’t want to look back years from now and wish I’d made a move on him – no matter how stupid.

I didn’t want to regret not giving it a try, even if it failed. When Levi left Portland, I wouldn’t see him again for at least another year, if not longer. Was it better to do something and regret it or not do something

and always wonder what would have happened?

"There are so many things I want to do; I'm just afraid," I said, wondering if he heard since my voice was so low.

"I read somewhere that the only way to deal with your fear is to face it," he raised a brow at that, a small smirk on his face.

The longer I sat there looking at him, completely oblivious to what was happening, the more I wanted to face my fears. If I acted, I'd have an answer, and then I could let this go or enjoy at least a night of adventure, right?

It was smaller than deciding to go to New York, at least.

I leaned into him and quickly pressed my lips against his, feeling fireworks explode across my nerves. Levi stiffened, and I almost wanted to run away. I could feel the tension in his body but didn't miss the softness of his lips or the stubble that tickled my chin. Just when I resigned myself to a thorough lecture, his lips parted, and his warm tongue brushed mine. My eyes opened wide. His eyes were closed, and his fingers brushed my cheek as he

sucked my bottom lip. I felt breathless. The softness of his lips brushing against mine caused a tingle to spread throughout my body.

Levi pulled back, and I remained as stiff as a mannequin, waiting for the ball to drop, my heart plummeting so hard it hit my stomach. Could I run now? Slam my door and hide under my bed? Wallow in shame? Had he only kissed me back because he pitied me?

"Hayley…" My name was soft and delicate on his lips.

"I'm sorry, I shouldn't have done that," I quickly said as I bolted from the sofa.

Levi stood with me, reaching for my shoulders as he steadied me in place. "Hey, it's fine. Don't worry about it."

"I'm so stupid!" I cursed, refusing to meet his gaze as my eyes watered.

"You aren't stupid. We stopped before we got carried away. It happens; don't beat up yourself over it," he said, as if this really was nothing.

"So much for facing your fears, huh," I sniffed as I shrugged out of his hold and ran to my room.

Chapter 4

Levi

Now, more than ever, I *needed* a long ride on my motorcycle. It was the only thing that ever really helped to clear my head. That call earlier had been enough motivation for a cruise on a long stretch of road. And then...

Hayley.

Who fucking knew?

I'd always envisioned her as the sweet, innocent little girl I'd known. Of course, I knew she'd graduated college, but she was still Hayley, nothing more or less. Sure, she had gotten more beautiful, and her features were more womanly and mature now, but I'd always considered her just sweet Hayley. I'd never asked about her dating, never asked about anything more than her accomplishments because I'd never pictured her as anything other than her – alone, smiling, successful.

Hell, in less than a day, that had been flipped with one single kiss (barely a kiss, as far as I was concerned) that shouldn't have happened.

Fuck! What was Hayley thinking kissing me, and what was I thinking to kiss her back, for even a second? I balled my hands into fists and tried to calm my breathing.

I could blame my hot-blooded nature, her beautiful face, her nervousness, but I'd done it all the same.

That was possibly the most vanilla kiss I'd ever have in my life, and I had only felt something close to it in pre-school when I had kissed Ashley Meade in the playground. My first ever kiss. Only, I'd not wanted to fuck Ashley Meade. As soon as my lips had touched Hayley's, all I could think about was ruining the rest of her innocence and showing her how much fun she should be having, could be having *with me*.

Fucking hell!

This was Hank's kid! He'd been my best friend for as long as I could remember. What I'd done was unforgivable, and I felt sick to

my stomach for considering it. How could I face him tomorrow, stand by his side as his best man after what had happened?

I'd never felt guilt for wanting a woman, and I never thought I would, but here I was, being eaten alive by my guilt and lust.

I switched the television off and went outside on the porch, taking in a lungful of fresh air as I gulped down the beer in my hand. This called for something stronger, but I had to use what I had. I wished I'd gone out instead of staying and deciding to watch a freaking movie. It would have kept me out of *this* mess.

Half an hour later, I headed back inside, the night's air having done nothing to make the situation better. On my way to the guest bedroom, I passed Hayley's room and paused for a second, wondering if I should check up on her.

But I didn't want to face her soon after. I still had a few things to sort through in my own head, and the further away I was from Hayley, the better it would be for both of us.

**

The following morning, I woke up to the sound of Hank's voice. With a groan, I glanced at my phone and realized it was just after six – three hours earlier than I had planned. My eyes felt gravelly, and my limbs still felt a bit tired from yesterday's travels, but I knew there was no going back to sleep. This was Hank's big day, and the man was probably happier than a child on Christmas morning. I didn't want to seem lazy, but the thought of going back to sleep was tempting.

I still didn't know how I'd look him in the eye after kissing his little princess.

I got up, headed to the bathroom to freshen up, then went to the kitchen where Hank was. He was by the counter drinking his coffee and reading the paper like the traditional man he was, while Hayley was by the stove, flipping pancakes. As soon as I saw her, my heart raced a little. Was this a heart attack? Wasn't I too young for that?

She looked just the same as yesterday in her ankle-length dress and black hair flowing

down her back, but somehow, she was different. Suddenly, her body was a mystery I needed to discover by touching her, ripping her loose dress off and memorizing her curves. I wanted to wrap her hair around my hand, pull her against me and show her how a kiss should be.

Maybe a heart attack would be easier to deal with.

"Morning," I said as I went to take a seat opposite Hank and the pot of coffee beside him.

"You're up early," he said, his eyes laced with excitement.

"Thanks to you," I chided.

"Sorry, I was on a call with my secretary; lost my temper a bit," he said.

I raised a brow. "You just can't seem to let go of work even for a day, can you?"

"I have a very serious job, buddy."

"Don't we all?" I asked, focusing on him consciously.

"I'd hardly consider photography serious," he jabbed, his voice laced with mirth.

“Yet here I am, living my best life,” I said, pouring myself coffee.

Hank scoffed. “Whatever.”

I glanced at Hayley, who tore her gaze away from me as soon as I caught her staring. I was just in time to catch the blush on her cheeks before she turned her back to me completely. I gritted my teeth, hating the new air around us. Normally, she’d smile at me, crack a joke or do something; instead, she was like a ghost in the kitchen, a reminder of last night.

I took a huge gulp of my coffee. It burned down my throat, but that must’ve been my karma slowly coming back to bite me in the ass. What could I say? I hated the silence; felt like if I didn’t keep talking, Hank would know I was guilty of something.

“Where’s Cecilia?” I asked.

“She’s at a friend’s house. She’ll be getting dressed there and then heading to the church.”

I nodded. “Are you nervous?”

“I’m too old to be nervous. This sort of thing should have happened a long time ago.

I'm just behind."

I grinned. "You might have a point there."

Just then, Hayley approached the table with two different servings of pancakes and bacon. "You guys can help yourself with whatever you want."

"Thanks, sweetheart," Hank said warmly.

"Thank you," I said, glancing at her, but she avoided my gaze.

I helped myself to some food, considering I'd not eaten anything much since I'd gotten here. Hank and I sat there while we ate, and through the corner of my eye, I watched as Hayley collected a plate and went to the living room, which was open concept to the kitchen. She had her back turned to us, but I knew that she could hear our conversation.

"So, when are you planning on flying back? Cecilia and I are going on a week's vacation right after the wedding."

"A week? You? No work?" I mocked, shock.

"Cecilia insisted, and as a newlywed

couple, I don't see how I could have denied that," he explained.

"Well, I'm just happy for that, at least. You deserve the break, even if you don't think you do."

Hank only smiled.

"I might stay a few days here. See the sights and maybe get some photos for my gallery. The landscape is beautiful here, so I'm looking forward to that," I answered finally.

Hank nodded understandably as he chewed his food. "Sounds great; at least Hayley will have some company until we get back," he said, and I almost choked on my food.

I cleared my throat. "Oh, I wouldn't want to intrude for so long. I could get a room at a motel in town."

Hank scoffed. "Nonsense. We have more than enough room, plus you're already here. I'm happy you're staying a few days, too, you can look out for her – I don't want any boys coming over."

"Dad!" Hayley suddenly exclaimed as she snapped her head around to confront us.

“What? The rule won’t change just because you’re a college graduate,” Hank informed sternly.

“I don’t even have a boyfriend,” Hayley defended.

“Good, but the point stands: I’d prefer if Levi is here in my absence.”

“What happened to me being a bad influence?” I jabbed, wondering if I was actually better than a boy Hayley’s age.

His head snapped up to me, his brown eyes now calculating. He chewed his bacon before speaking. “This is just for a few days.”

“So is New York,” I said.

“New York isn’t Portland. Even the air is polluted there. I don’t want Hayley having any part of it,” he said, drinking the last of his coffee.

Hayley got up from her seat and carried her nearly full plate to the kitchen. Her ears were red, and by that, I knew she was angry – rightly so. Without another word, she left the room, the soft slam of her room door echoing in the distance – none of which Hank seemed to notice.

I released a heavy sigh.

**

The wedding was held in a little chapel in town, small and quaint. Cars were parked on the sides of the streets while people hastened inside to get seated, though some lingered to take pictures outside. The benches were decorated with flowers, which led to the front, where there was an arbor made up of white cloth and a variety of pink and white flowers. Their fresh scent filled the cozy chapel, greeting everyone as they walked in.

It was pitiful and ironic how I couldn't even be the photographer at my best friend's wedding. I'd have to wait for the reception to take any photos to give him – photos that would measure up to my expectations.

A few more people came in as the time drew nearer. The small number of guests didn't surprise me. I was sure it was at Hank's request. He was already there, and his side of the church was already filled with fifteen people, with the exception of Hayley, who had

not made an appearance yet.

When she did, she was stunning, and the mere sight of her took my breath away. She wasn't adorned in any long dress that hid her figure but was instead dressed in something better that emphasized her flared hips and her tiny waist. The dress brushed against her knees, giving me just a hint of her smooth legs. And though her cleavage was covered, her bosom was now more pronounced than I'd ever seen it. I could feel the fire rushing through my veins.

My eyes shifted to her lips, all glossy, looking more tempting than any lips I'd ever seen. I felt the lower muscles of my belly tighten in response and looked away before I could get hard.

I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe there was an actual woman under all those unshapely clothes. She was more beautiful than I had ever realized.

For the entire ceremony, all I could think about was her, even though I was beside her father, fashioning myself as his best man. The hypocrisy. But I was a man after all and

wouldn’t be much of one if I hadn’t enjoyed Hayley’s beauty. I never could ignore a gorgeous woman and Hayley, as insane as it sounded, was in my top ten.

Chapter 5

Hayley

As soon as I'd walked in that church earlier, I could feel the eyes on me, and yet there was only person I wanted to look at me: Levi. And he had, much to my satisfaction. He'd stared at me, and I'd watched as his hazel eyes roamed every inch of my frame, how his Adam's apple bobbed just before he tore his gaze away.

I wasn't experienced, but I knew desire when I saw it and knew that Levi must have been thinking the same kind of thoughts I'd been dealing with for years. I hoped so. I'd wanted to smile but didn't want to give anything away at the same time.

When I'd ordered the dress, I just saw it and immediately fell in love. When I'd gotten it, I worried it was too different but didn't want to try and find something else. It was after putting it on, before coming here, that I

thought of getting a reaction from him. It wasn't my usual style, and I'd probably get a scolding from my dad at the end of the ceremony, but I was happy I chose it.

I was in a good mood for the entire ceremony and throughout the reception, though I realized Levi was still trying his best to avoid me. Not that I could blame him – I'd been too forward, had basically jumped him, and that wasn't something I expected him to forgive. He'd known my father longer than he'd known me. That bond should have been enough of a restraint for me, but my desires couldn't just go away with the wave of a hand. Despite the complexities and everything I wanted for my future, my body still wanted Levi.

The reception was okay for the most part but mostly consisted of Cecilia and her giggling friends, which sometimes made me wonder if our ages were reversed. They were having the time of their lives and were happy to let loose, and I could tell that my dad was, too.

That's what mattered. I smiled just watching the new, happily married couple.

Cecilia was good for him – she made him step out of his box, which was a good thing. I hoped I'd get to have someone like Cecilia in my life – maybe a little less loud but just as bubbly and willing to see the beauty in everyday things.

Maybe I could find that person if Cecilia kept balancing my dad out, and if she and I could convince him I could handle freedom, could handle the world, I'd be happy to call her my stepmom.

I glanced over at Levi every now and then and realized he had his camera out and was taking pictures of the setup and of my dad and Cecilia, who was at the main table. He looked sexy doing it. I didn't know if it was because of my growing obsession for him or just plain fact, but he looked great with a few buttons now undone on his undershirt, his hair a little messier than usual and utter focus on his face.

I always found it hard to believe that he and my dad were the same age – even now. Sure, Levi was a couple of months younger, but there was a huge difference in their appearance and style. Levi looked at least ten

years younger, while my dad looked a few years older than his actual age. I always found that incredible.

Lost in my thoughts, I didn't even realize when he came and sat beside me.

"You're enjoying yourself?" he asked.

"Yeah, it's nice, isn't it?"

"It is. Hank looks happy."

"I'm glad I'm not the only one who noticed," I answered brightly.

"I like Cecilia."

After a moment to make sure I was being honest, I answered, "I like her, too."

He finally turned to look at me, his gaze lingering before he even opened his mouth to speak. My body filled with warmth.

"You look lovely," he said.

I couldn't contain my smile. "Thank you."

"Look, Hayley, about what happened –"

"Could we not talk about that please – not here, at least," I said in a hushed tone. "Or … ever."

"I don't want things to be awkward

between us," he said, making my body hotter than it already was.

"It doesn't have to be," I said, sitting straighter. "I get that you're not interested. That it was a mistake, and I'm going to move on."

"Then why do you avoid my gaze every chance you get?"

My head snapped to his, and I regretted it the moment our gazes held. I felt like I was melting, like I was being sucked in by the look in his eyes. It was primal, it was hot, and I instantly knew, aside from his good looks and his beautiful physique, this was the way Levi brought all the ladies to their knees.

"I don't," I said as if this moment proved it.

His lips tugged in a smile, and I knew he wasn't convinced. "Let's just pretend like nothing happened, okay?"

I forced myself to nod. It was the smart way to do things. He'd made himself clear, and he was saving me from a lecture and a mess with my dad. I'd forget. I would.

An hour later, the reception simmered down to goodbyes. My dad and Cecilia approached me – Cecilia with a huge smile on her face.

“Congrats again, guys,” I said, smiling at them both.

Cecilia was just beaming. “Aww, thank you, Hayley.”

“Thanks, sweetheart, but we should get going now. We have a flight to catch,” Dad said, glancing down at his bride lovingly.

“Oh, you have everything?”

“Yes, our suitcases are all packed, and we’re ready to go,” he smiled, glancing at Levi. “You take care of her now.”

Levi gave him a knowing look. “Stop stalling and get out of here.”

Dad chuckled, reaching for a hug, which was brief as usual. “I’ll be back before you know it. If you need anything, you know I’ll always have time for you, no matter what.”

My cheeks burned. “Dad…”

He kissed me on the forehead, ignoring my protest. Cecilia giggled, coming in for a

hug as soon as my dad pulled away. “Make the best of his absence,” she whispered in my ear, winking when she eased up.

“Okay, guys, have fun,” I said, eager to rush them away before this could get more embarrassing.

My dad persisted. “I’ll call you once we arrive.”

I smiled. “Okay, Dad.”

I was left alone with Levi afterwards, the heat of his presence burning into my skin.

“Well, I should be heading home,” I said to drown the silence that settled around us.

“I should, too. I’m picking up a motorcycle on my way there. Come with me.”

It wasn’t smart. I needed to get over my crush on Levi and accept nothing would happen. Then, again, riding a motorcycle … that was new.

“Ok, I’ll come,” I agreed.

We took an Uber to a motor shop in town, and I could see how happy Levi was when we arrived. He was beaming. The men there had similar styles – inked in tattoos, big

and burly and looked very intimidating. Yet none of them was as tall as Levi or as refined.

"I'll be back," he said to me as he went to talk with one of the guys.

I stood there and hugged my shoulders, my gaze on the sky, noticing how quickly night was falling. I took a whiff of the fresh air and leaned against a wall as I waited for Levi.

My dad wouldn't even approve of me being at a place like this because, according to him, bikers weren't the best people in town. It always amazed me how the very things he hated and warned me against were the things that made up his best friend. Maybe for him, Levi was the one exception.

"You ever ridden on a motorcycle before?" Levi asked as he came towards me.

"Never," I was quick to say, following behind him as he walked to the other end of the shop.

There, it had a variety of bikes, some looking brand new while some looked a little worn. Levi was like a kid in a candy shop as his gaze traveled along every single one of them – his hazel eyes seemingly glistening as

he took them in.

Another man stood beside one of the bikes, patting it as if it were something he cherished.

“Our newest Harley,” he said, pride evident on his plump, red cheeks.

“She’s a beauty,” Levi muttered under his breath, his gaze transfixed on the bike.

I didn’t know anything about motorcycles, but this one was a beauty and a beast all in one with its all-black features. I thought it fitted perfectly with the sort of man Levi was.

“All yours, Mr. Harlow,” the man said.

Levi moved towards it, tracing his hand along the fine, shiny details on the bike. He looked towards me, and my breath caught in my throat.

“Come on, Hayles. Prepare for the ride of your life,” he said, handing me the single helmet that had been strapped to the handle.

“W-what will you wear?” I asked.

“Trust me, I’ll be fine. Come on.”

I moved towards him and stood there as

he placed the helmet over my head and strapped it under my chin. I tried my very best not to look up at him, but it was hard to do when he was this close to me. When I did, his eyes met mine, and my chest tightened.

How was I going to destroy this crush with him still here? Even after he rejected me, he was still giving me attention, including me, looking at me.

He smiled once done and stepped away before he climbed onto the bike and revved up the engine. I watched the bike with excited anxiety coiling in my belly. But I trusted Levi – I trusted that I'd reach home safely with him in control – and wouldn't have wanted it any other way.

I climbed onto the back of the bike, holding onto his strong, firm body for support.

"Hold on, Hayles," he said, and the motorcycle revved again, growling like an impatient panther.

My hands tightened around Levi's waist, and he chuckled, glancing over his shoulder at me, a small smile on his face. With a nod to the burly man, he rode off, and I stiffened as I

clung to him, wondering if I was holding him too tight, but more afraid of falling off.

Levi said nothing, and I took that as a sign that he was okay. As nervous as I was – this being my first time on a motorcycle – I found comfort in holding onto Levi. I felt safe and protected, even though I was behind him. Halfway through the journey, I started to let go of my fear and instead began to focus on the long stretch of road that seemed endless. The breeze was cool, and the tail of my dress was blowing in the wind as well as my hair.

I found my grip started to loosen on Levi as I started to enjoy the ride. It felt freeing, and I'd never experienced anything as thrilling and calming at the same time. I didn't want the moment to end.

It took effort to keep from throwing my hands up and leaning back to make the most of the experience. The first rebellion I'd tasted ... maybe the second, but Levi and I agreed the kiss didn't exist.

The motorcycle slowed, and I realized he was about to turn into our front yard. Part of me had wanted it to be longer because I'd

finally understood what Levi meant when he said it cleared his head. Shortly after, the bike came to a stop, and I climbed off, my legs wobbly.

I giggled, reaching out to Levi to steady myself. He smiled and held me in place while a blush roasted my cheeks.

“That was amazing!” I said, taking off the helmet.

“Imagine doing it every day. Best feeling in the world,” he said.

I nodded in agreement. “I believe it.”

He climbed off and stood before me, towering over me with his broad shoulders still adorned in his tux. His hair was a bit disheveled, but that made him almost mouth-watering. I sucked my bottom lip, thinking of our half-kiss but tried to banish the thought.

I just had to get some necessary distance between us. One slip could be overlooked, but two? One rejection was definitely enough.

With a parting smile, I went in the house. My phone shrilled as soon as I entered my bedroom. I dug through my purse, glanced at the caller ID and realized it was my old

roommate and the closest I had to a friend – Enid.

"Hey," I asked, surprised and excited since I hadn't heard from her in over a week.

"Hey, girl, I miss you so much!" she exclaimed. I smiled, but realized she was somewhere on the tipsy scale.

"I miss you, too," I said, taking a seat on the bed.

The noisy background became clearer, and I figured she was out having fun as she had said she'd do when we last spoke.

"I wish you could come. I'm having the time of my life, and I know you'd enjoy every bit of it, too," Enid said, an obvious pout in her voice.

"I'm glad you're having a good time," I said, wishing my voice sounded chirpier. "You deserve it after that last semester."

"Ugh, it's indescribable really. I posted some photos to my Instagram story. Have you seen them?"

"Er – no, I haven't looked yet."

"Oh, okay, well, when you have the

time, check it out. How are things with your dad?”

I scratched my head. “He’s actually on his way to his honeymoon.”

“No fucking way. You have the house to yourself!”

“Well actually, my dad’s friend is here; Levi.”

There was a short pause. “As in the hot one that lives in New York.?

“Yeah,” I said, glancing at the door.

“Fuck, that’s insane. Don’t you plan on doing anything wild while he’s there?”

“Like what?”

“I don’t know, but damn, you get the house to yourself for the first time in forever. Throw a party for fuck’s sake,” she laughed.

I knew she was joking. “You’re funny.”

“At least stay out past curfew or something!”

“Levi invited me to New York, is that enough?” I asked, playing with the hem of my shirt.

“No way! So, when are you going?”

“My dad didn’t approve.”

“Shit, I should have known. But Hayley, you’re an adult.”

I combed my fingers through my hair. “It’s complicated.”

“Bullshit. All your life you’ve done everything to make your dad happy. It’s time for you to do something for you now. You’re his only daughter – trust me, if he’s pissed, it won’t be forever.”

If only Enid really understood how badly my dad wanted to keep me in place, keep me from growing up, keep me as his little girl. I wasn’t allowed to have boys over. Though I still couldn’t understand why my dad was so fine with Levi. How he could allow Levi to exist exactly as he was, but I couldn’t even go to Seattle.

“Thanks for the advice,” I said finally.

“No probs. Listen, I’ll give you a call some other time, okay. I’m getting back to the girls.”

“Okay, have fun.”

The call ended, and I opened an app to check the photos she had posted. A smile crept

over my face. They were great photos. The first was Enid and a couple of other girls taking a selfie, with drinks in their hands, mid laugh. She was happy in every single picture and rightly celebrating after four years of pouting over missing frat parties so she could study.

If my dad ever saw me like this, I wouldn't hear the end of it. According to him, this type of behavior was just a waste of time and posting it online was worse. He didn't see the fun in things, just the logic behind it. He played it safe with every single thing he did and would often say that was the reason he was where he was at in life now. For a while, I'd believed that but had realized there was so much to life that needed to be explored.

Raindrops spattered on my window, and before I knew it, a hard downpour of rain beat down on the house. This was my favorite weather, and I'd usually spend the time cuddled up in my room watching a movie. Maybe that was what I was supposed to do right now.

The front door slammed, and I bolted from the bed, wondering if someone was

coming in or out. As I rushed to the front door, I saw Levi in the rain, running towards his motorcycle, which was completely wet.

He spotted me, his eyes squinted. “Can you open the garage for me?”

Without answering, I rushed there and pressed the button. With a whir, the door moved steadily up. The rain blew in, and I shrieked, a little wet from standing so close. Levi pulled the bike inside, almost grunting as he walked it forward.

“Sorry about that,” he said, looking down at me. His throat bobbed before he tore his gaze away. “This storm looks like it’ll be an all-nighter. Better to play it safe, you know?”

“Yeah; it rains here most of the time, though – it’s one thing to love about Portland.”

There was a glint in his eyes as he refocused his gaze on me. “I prefer the sun on my skin, but the rain’s great sometimes.”

His eyes traveled down the length of me, and my body grew heated from the intensity of his perusal. He might prefer the

sun, but rain looked good on him; completely wet, his shirt clinging to him and emphasizing every rigid muscle on his torso.

"Very good sometimes," he murmured, almost too low for me to hear.

I sucked in a breath as he took a half step forward. The air around me crackled as our eyes met, and he leaned forward. I reached out a hand, not sure if I wanted to stop him or drag him closer.

"Um," I breathed. "You're ... I'm ... wet."

He licked across his bottom lip, and his eyebrow cocked up for a second before he looked at his own shirt. He chuckled at some joke I didn't get and nodded. "I'd better go change out of these clothes."

"Yeah." For both of our sakes.

With that, he left, and I headed back to my room. I realized that I was wetter than I thought. I was soaked, the dress clinging to my body like a second skin. I wondered if that was the reason Levi looked at me the way he did. Had he felt the tension sparking between us, too?

Was there actually a tiny cell in Levi's body that wanted me?

Chapter 6

Hayley

At minutes to midnight, I was still awake and knew it was solely because of Levi. Knowing we were alone in the house, after all his looks today, the ride on the bike, the way the air sizzled around us in the garage, all I could imagine was touching him.

I slung my legs from the bed and stood, picking at my fingers and giving it one last thought. I then walked towards the door and down the hall, the anticipated drumroll being the sound of my pounding heart.

I just need to get water, that's all. I needed to cool off, to relax and ...

Just as I was about to pass his door, Levi exited the room, dressed in only his boxers and a large t-shirt. Though my inspection of him was quick, I couldn't ignore the huge bulge in his boxers. My entire body coursed with heat, my cheeks stinging almost painfully

at the realization.

Levi started, clearly not expecting to bump into me in the middle of the night. My lips parted to form words, to explain I'd been going to get water and that just so happened to mean I had to walk by his room.

"Hayley, I didn't think you'd be up," he said, his voice a little gruff.

"I couldn't sleep," I quickly said, my voice cracking a little.

"Is everything okay?" he asked.

I didn't know how to answer him. He had a boner, which meant he was probably fantasizing about some other woman or watching porn. This was probably my cue to leave.

"Everything is fine," I said, my voice gone soft. "Just ... going to get water."

Silence enveloped us as he scratched the back of his neck. I stood there, wishing his hard on was meant for me. It wasn't. It was so obvious now. What was I to him other than a kid?

"I should ... go to the kitchen," I stammered.

I turned to leave, gasping when I felt his hand clasping around my wrist. I came to a halt, afraid to turn around to face him. When I did, his eyes darkened, his touch sending bolts of fire throughout my body. All that echoed between us was the sound of rain on the roof. It felt like I was going to faint with his hand still on mine and my body just inches away from his boner.

"Levi?" I asked softly.

"Did you think that counted as a kiss?" He asked slowly.

Was he drunk? "What kiss. You said it didn't happen, so it didn't ... right?"

"I fucking wish," he growled, low and deep, creeping under my skin and tightening my core.

Was that an insult?

"Then don't think about it," I murmured. "It's easy ... if it wasn't a kiss by your standards."

"Not that easy, Hayley. I feel fucked up just thinking ..." his eyes dipped to my lips.

This wasn't a man saying no. *This* wasn't a rejection. Slowly, I took a step towards him.

A little rebellion never hurt, right?

Another step. My dad didn't have to know.

And then I was almost right against him. Secrets were the only adventure I got in a small town.

"Welcome to every thought I've had since … since I picked you up at the airport," I whispered.

I don't know who moved first, him or me. All I knew is our lips crashed together as thunder rumbled. This time, it didn't taste minty, amazing. Levi knotted his fingers in my shirt against the small of my back and groaned as he backed me against the wall. His tongue taught mine new strokes as he showed me why the kiss I'd given him really was nothing.

He feasted on me like he was starving for me alone. His free hand gripped my hair, jerking me tighter against him as he changed the angle and renewed the kiss, leaving my knees shaking, a little moan ripping from my throat.

His erection poked my stomach, liquid heat pooling in my core and heightening my

desire, my need. He kissed me roughly, nipping at my bottom lip, sucking my tongue, grinding against me.

Another small moan left my lips, and I could feel my pussy throb in hopeful anticipation. I melted against Levi and gently touched his sides, eager to feel him, to be sure this was real, he was real.

"I've wanted to do this the right way since you kissed me," he growled, tearing his lips away from mine, moving them to my cheeks, against my ear, always on my skin.

I arched my neck when he dipped his head, and he licked, nibbled, even sucked right over my pulse. My eyes closed as I basked in the feeling of having him touch me, kiss me.

"You have?" I finally asked.

"You've been on my mind like a fucking plague, Hayley. I haven't been thinking straight ever since we kissed that night."

I whimpered at his hardness against me, just inches from my core. Could I survive if we stopped now, if he pulled away?

I pulled away to catch my breath, to

look him in the eyes and really see his desire. I wanted to hear him say it. I needed to see the look in his eyes when he did.

"You want me?" I sounded breathless.

The near feral look in his eyes sent a shiver through my body. "Right now, I need you."

My chest rose and fell from my heavy intakes of breath. "I- I've wanted you for so long."

The muscles worked in his jaw. He closed the space between us, and I craned my neck to look up at him.

"Show me how much," he said, his voice that same husky growl as before.

I kissed him again, trying to keep up with all the new tricks he showed me. Levi felt good to kiss; his lips were soft, his tongue was rough and skillful and his stubble grazing my chin created the perfect balance between naughty and nice.

"Tell me what you want, Hayley. I'll give all that and more." With that he lifted me in his arms, and, on reflex, I wrapped my legs around him as he carried me to his bedroom.

“I want everything,” I said when he laid me on the bed.

He towered over me like a giant, removing his t-shirt. I marveled at his body and the tattoos that were evenly distributed along one half of his body. It was beautiful. *He* was beautiful.

“You have to be more specific than that. I want the details,” he said seriously.

My mouth opened and closed as he gently stroked my instep, watching me intently. He exhaled slowly. “I’ve been right here, fantasizing about you, about how I want you. Every way to touch you, where to kiss you, positions I could use to fuck you.”

I swallowed, my throat feeling parched. “I want you inside me.”

He leaned over me. “Don’t you want me to lick that pretty pussy of yours?”

I almost gasped. “You- you’d do that?”

“I’ll finger you, lick every inch of your body, fuck you ... all you have to do is ask.” That same single finger traced along the inside of my ankle, up and down but steadily climbing.

I swallowed, nodding.

“Words, Hayley,” he said, his tone almost sounding like a warning.

“I want – I want you to lick me… please.”

A small smirk crept at the corners of his mouth. “Good girl.”

Somehow, hearing that phrase this time around didn’t make me feel like a nun. Two words that felt like a better reward than I’d ever earned. I wanted it again, to do whatever it took to get those words from his lips.

He climbed on top of me and kissed me again, rough, deep but slower than in the hallway. He gently nipped, then sucked my bottom lip.

I whimpered as he palmed my breast, caressing, stroking, until my nipple poked through the fabric. He focused on that spot, pinching and flicking his fingers across my sensitive nipple.

“Levi …” I rasped.

“I want to take my time with you, Hayley, to show you everything you’ve been missing out on,” he purred, kissing down my

neck slowly.

“I ... I had offers; I always said no,” I said, despite him not asking.

A low groan left his throat as he nipped at my neckline. It felt like approval. He lifted my shirt, and my arms wrapped around my breasts protectively.

He stroked over my arms. “Are you being shy?”

I didn’t want to tell him I was a virgin. If I did, he might stop. I sucked my bottom lip, then met his intense, hazel eyes. “The other girls you’ve been with-”

“Aren’t on my mind. Not remotely. There’s only you,” he promised. “More than twenty-four hours of hell and torment, wanting you and telling myself no. Wanting you and finding reasons not to. Only one thing will stop this.”

“W-what?” I ask.

“You saying ‘no’,” he answered, kissing across my jaw before whispering against my lips. “If you do, we stop, no matter what we’re doing.”

“I ... I don’t want to say no. I want ... I

want you to lick my ... me."

He kissed me again, massaging my tongue with his until I let my hands fall away. Levi drew the kiss out longer, then looked at my breasts. They weren't huge, but he stared at my chest like it was better than anything he'd ever seen. He circled my nipple with a lazy finger while licking over the other.

I jumped, shocked at how sensitive I was. I whimpered as he licked and sucked one nipple while teasing the other with light rubbing and pinching.

If this felt good, how was I going to handle more?

But he continued down my body, kissing my belly, then tugging my pajama pants off with my help. He kissed my inner thigh, spreading my legs around his broad shoulders as his thumb stroked over my panties, making my hips buck against him, desperate for more friction.

"You're soaked," he hummed, watching his thumb move up and down.

"I ... I don't want to stop."

He grinned and kissed between my

breasts before hooking his fingers into the sides of my panties and dragging them down, leaving me stark naked. At least I had given myself a landing strip.

Enid had convinced me to start shaving just a few months ago, and I wanted to thank her for it. Still, I almost covered myself. Levi caught my hands. “Stop hiding from me.”

“I …”

“You’re gorgeous,” he said, taking a second look me over, from eyes to pussy. “Perfect.”

Somehow, his words managed to turn me on even more.

Levi stroked me with two fingers, taking his time as he moved over my clit and all the way down until I was sure he’d push inside me. I gasped and tried to keep my legs from shaking. Every touch was too much and not enough. I wanted to beg, beg for him to fix it, to give me what I needed but didn’t know how to ask for.

“Levi, that feels so good,” I panted.

He continued to rub my clit as I tried to make sense of every overwhelming sensation

rippling through me. He looked at me and grinned a boyish smile. “This will feel even better.”

He lowered his head and pressed his lips there, kissing me before he started licking over my clit. I gasped, gripping onto the bed sheets that held Levi’s masculine scent.

He sucked and licked my clit, trying different moves that I couldn’t describe. My thoughts nearly stopped. All I could do was feel. Feel his wet tongue moving across my pussy, feel pleasure building on itself until my toes curled and my pussy clenched, feel his tongue press into my entrance.

My body trembled, and I felt dangerously close to an orgasm. Levi licked me from side to side, moving faster and faster, devouring me until my hips lifted against his mouth, and I rubbed myself on his tongue.

“God, yes, I want you inside me!” the words slipped from my mouth without warning. “Please!”

He eased up to speak to me, his finger still rubbing against my flesh. “What do you want inside of you, Hayley?”

I couldn't say the word. "You."

He slipped two fingers inside me, going as deep as he could. He towered over me yet again, his fingers still inside, moving, curling, spreading. I watched him as I moaned, fighting the urge to close my eyes.

"Next time I want you to say the words. I want you to tell me you want my cock, Hayley."

"Mmm," I nodded, sucking in my breath when he added another finger. "Yes."

"Are you sure this is what you want?"

"I'm so sure."

His fingers curled inside me, and my back arched off the bed, my body rising as a flood of pleasure crashed into me. But just when I felt as if I were going to burst into a million pieces, he withdrew his fingers and brought them to my mouth. I timidly opened my mouth to take them in, tasting myself and watching as his eyes darkened.

As soon as he withdrew them, he kissed me hungrily. Somehow, I knew ... this was just the start.

Chapter 7

Levi

Hayley's purity and innocence filled me with a type of desire that I couldn't control. I knew she was virgin, though I hadn't fucked her yet, there were certain tells. No experienced woman hid her body like Hayley or shied away. Hell, she'd basically told me.

Knowing I'd be her first humbled me, tested my resolve and drove me absolutely insane.

I didn't want to think about what would happen after. I just wanted to make the most of this moment, Hayley's wetness on my tongue, her moans mine, every eager yes for me alone.

My cock twitched in my boxers looking down at her, face flushed, hair a mess, completely naked, watching me as if waiting for what was next.

I couldn't wait a second longer. Jerking

off hadn't done shit for me. The only cure for the lust, my painfully hard cock, and my sanity was giving Hayley what we both wanted: a night we wouldn't forget.

Yet, as much as I wanted to take her, I had to take my time to worship every inch of her perfect body that had been a shame to be covered up the way she did. Her skin was pale, and spotless, not a single blemish in sight. She was as soft as silk, and I wanted to memorize how she felt.

I kept working my fingers in her tight pussy again, trying to get her to relax as I licked and sucked one of her nipples. She trembled and bucked against me, so damn sensitive. I wasn't sure one round would be enough.

"Levi, please," her little mewl fueled me.

I eased up from the bed and peeled my boxers off, my dick springing free. I couldn't take my eyes off the expression on Hayley's face as she feasted her eyes on my length, her pale cheeks brightening with a blush. She swallowed as she looked up at me.

“You’re so big,” she said, her voice almost like a whisper.

“Do you think it will fit?” I asked, stroking it once while watching her.

She wet her lips with the tip of her tongue, her eyes still fixed on my length. “I want to try.”

I smiled down at her before I leaned in and kissed her, laying her back. My tongue explored her sweet mouth, sucking on her tongue while I used my hand to direct my cock to her pussy. Her hands slid along my side, then traced the muscle of my back. I moaned, just above the sounds of her wetness as I rubbed the tip of my cock along her slit.

She moaned, her eyes fluttering, her bottom lip trapped between her teeth. Her back arched, welcoming me. Still, I waited until she whimpered. “P-please!”

“Look at me, angel. I want to watch your face when I fill you,” I said.

Her dazzling blue eyes opened up to meet mine, filled with vulnerability and lust. I brushed my lips over hers softly before I pressed my length to her entrance. I watched

as her lips parted.

"I'll make this good for you, I promise," I soothed.

When the tip popped in, she gasped, her grip tightening on my arm. I held her gaze, dropping my fingers to rub her clit as I gave one firm thrust, pausing as soon as I broke the barrier of her virginity. Her mouth widened, tears welling in her eyes.

"The pain won't last, I promise," I swore.

As wet as Hayley was, she still hugged me like a vice grip and for a second, I doubted if she could take all of me. I held still all the same. "Do you want to stop?"

"N-no!" She bit out. "Don't stop. I want you, this."

"Good girl," I crooned, kissing her slowly, then deeper.

I drew back as I sunk deeper, then drew back, determined to make this as painless as possible. She didn't take her eyes off me, and I found myself being pulled in by her ocean-blue eyes. I couldn't help but kiss her if even to take her mind off the short moment of

discomfort.

She clung to me then, kissing me hard. I sunk another inch into her, pulling back when she bit my lip. I was taken aback but chuckled when I saw the look on her face.

“Oh God, I’m so sorry!” she exclaimed.

“You’ve got some fire in you, don’t you?”

She blushed while I struggled with my own restraint. Hayley was tight and snug and warm and certainly the perfect remedy on a rainy night like this. I increased the pace, and she dug her nails into me.

“Yes,” she said softly. “Levi …”

“Tell me how good it feels, angel,” I encouraged.

“You feel so good,” she said, her voice breathy, her nails dragging down my back.

I slowly slid more and more of my length, increasing my pace each time. Hayley’s entire body was flushed, her skin glistening with a soft sheen of sweat.

“Can you take more?”

“I want all of you,” she said, lifting

slightly to prove it.

I groaned and gave her every inch of me. She gasped, then wrapped one leg over my hip. Fuck control. I took her the way I needed, still curbing the roughness I was used to. My arms shook as I fought to control my own orgasm.

“Talk to me,” I encouraged.

“So good. Please, Levi … more,” she begged.

“You like my cock more than my fingers, don’t you?” I asked, trying to stay focused. I couldn’t come before she did.

“Yes! So, so good.”

She started matching my pace, her hips moving with mine until restraint was a hollow dream. I gripped her hair, forcing her to watch me. She whimpered and moaned, her eyes filled with wonder as I pumped into her.

I eased and held her legs, pressing them to her chest with her wet pussy on full display. I had the full view now, my cock lost in her tight little entrance.

“Fuck, you’re so beautiful,” I growled, still moving inside her like a man damned.

“Don’t slow down.” The words were like a plea; being given the greenlight felt great but also damning.

I couldn’t seem to stop myself. I fucked her roughly, her moans louder each time. Her pussy seemed to suck me deeper as her back arched, and she clawed me, her eyes fluttering shut as she let out a wild moan, so gorgeous and primal that I felt it tug on my own release.

I didn’t stop until she writhed on the bed. I tried to pull out, but her pussy spasmed around me, and I came. I ground into her, milking every bit of pleasure from my own orgasm.

Even when I finished, her pussy tightened around me, making me groan. I panted and released her legs, kissing her slowly. Then I realized … I’d just come *in* her. Not on, not in her mouth, in her pussy without a condom right after taking her virginity.

I pulled out, and she gasped. I collapsed beside her, watching her from where I lay. I loved the beautiful rise and fall of her glistening chest, the flushness of her body, her reddened cheeks and the small smile on her

face.

Hayley looked like a woman who was thoroughly satisfied. I smiled despite my concern. I almost asked if she was on birth control, but that couldn't be the first thing I said after fucking her.

I had to be gentle, say the right words, do something.

After a second, she turned to me, a bigger smile on her face, her hair a mess. "That exceeded my expectations; thank you."

I chuckled. "What a way with words. You should be a poet."

She stuck out her tongue playfully. "And you should take a picture instead of staring so much."

"Is that so?"

She blushed and shook her head. "No. I like how your staring feels."

As she snuggled up to me, contented in my arms, it dawned on me in the silence. I never did cuddles. No woman asked me for them, and it just wasn't something I offered.

Yet here Hayley was. My best friend's

daughter. There was no fucking way. After a few minutes, I turned to ask her if she was on birth control or if we needed plan B, but she was fast asleep. I slid my arm free and sighed heavily.

Having sex with the girl was one thing. Cuddling, a slightly more damning thing. Coming in her was unforgivable, but sleeping in the same bed as her? No way. That was for couples, and I wasn't cruel enough to give her that idea.

Grabbing a blanket, I went to the living room and got myself comfortable on the sofa. I could fix everything ... in the morning.

Chapter 8

Hayley

I found myself smiling even before I opened my eyes. My body felt great – though a little sore. I was alive, the world hadn't caved in … breaking a rule hadn't gotten me tossed in hell. That was a win on top of a win.

I grinned and stretched, finally opening my eyes. Then I realized Levi wasn't beside me. I'd always fantasized about the morning after with him and waking up in his arms. But he wasn't here. Maybe he just got an early start today?

I glanced at the time and realized it was nine, not too late, but definitely not early. I got out of bed, headed to the bathroom and pulled on a robe. There was still no sign of Levi when I got back.

I went to the living room, my brows furrowing when I saw the blanket on the sofa. A painful lump formed in my throat as it

dawned on me. Did Levi sleep here last night instead of in the bed with me?

Tears pricked my eyes, and just as they welled up, about to fall, I heard the sound of a motorcycle pulling up outside. My throat constricted; I went to the front window and confirmed that it was him.

There was time to avoid this conversation, to choose not to have it, but if I could have sex with him, let him see, touch, and lick every part of me, I could talk to him about this, too.

I hugged my shoulders and stood at a distance, waiting for him to enter. When he did, he paused when he saw me standing there, his face unreadable.

"Good morning," he said.

I swallowed hard. "Is everything okay?"

"Yeah, why wouldn't it be?" he asked, ruffling his hair a bit as he placed his helmet on an end table.

"Did you sleep here last night?" I asked.

His gaze shifted to the sofa, his teeth gritting. "I did."

“Why?”

“I didn’t want to disturb you while you slept.” I hated how simple he made it sound.

I shook my head. “You don’t have to lie to me, Levi – we’ve known each other for too long.”

He pulled in a breath. “Look, Hayley, I’m sorry. I didn’t want to make this seem like something it wasn’t.”

I scoffed. “What?”

“What happened between us can’t happen again. I didn’t want to get the lines crossed.”

My throat constricted. “Right. I forgot you’re Levi Harlow, after all.”

His brows furrowed. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“It means you got what you wanted, and now it’s back to regular programming,” I snapped, feeling the tears burn my eyes even more. I was so hurt I couldn’t resist quoting his words from last night. “So much for whatever I wanted, giving me that and more.”

“Hayley, that’s not what happened

here."

"Then educate me. Clearly, I'm too naïve and took you at your word last night."

He sighed heavily. "We both had a good time, but at the end of the day, we can't change the facts. You're my best friend's kid. It's better to end it now before either of us get …"

"Right, and that didn't cross your mind when you were inside me last night, did it?"

He raked his hand through his hair and released a heavy sigh. "What do you want from me?"

I gawked at him, utterly at a loss. How could something so amazing for me mean nothing to him at all? "Nothing. Absolutely nothing. I got what I wanted, too, right. It's a win-win, I guess. We'll just forget about it, like the kiss that never happened right? Poof, I'm a virgin again, and you just had a really great dream."

He marched towards me, his footsteps heavy on the hardwood floor. I saw it coming and took a step back. "Don't. Don't touch me. Don't talk to me. Don't start anything that

won’t mean a damn thing tomorrow.”

“Not being able to do something and it not meaning something are two different things,” Levi growled.

When he stood in front me, he cupped my face into his large hands and kissed me hard. My knees grew weak, and I had to hold onto him to steady myself. Desire pooled in the pit of my stomach, my arousal already kicking in as my body became alert by the familiar feel of Levi’s body against mine.

He pushed me against the wall and kissed me hungrily while his fingers searched the slit of the robe for my pussy. Just as he placed his fingers there to enter me, my phone rang and put a halt to everything. I tore my lips away from Levi’s looking up at him before I slid from in front of him.

He'd just said we couldn’t do anything, and I was so weak, I let ‘anything’ happen. When was I going to get some spine? I went to my room to get the phone. Seeing ‘Dad’ there made my blood run cold. I cleared my throat.

“Hey, Dad, good morning.”

“Hey sweetheart. How are you?”

He didn't want to really know.

"I'm great; how's your honeymoon going so far?" I asked.

"Well, it's good as it goes. We didn't do much last night since we arrived late, but Cecilia has a few things planned for us today."

"That sounds good."

"I tried calling you last night, but you must've been asleep. It was pretty late anyway, but I wanted you to know we'd arrived safely."

I swallowed hard. "Oh yeah, I must have been asleep."

"How's Levi?"

I glowered at my doorway. "He's fine. He just came back from a ride."

"Oh, he got the motorcycle."

"Yeah, he did."

"Well, you know better than to go on it, don't know?"

I felt like I was being scolded, though I hadn't even been *caught* doing anything. "Of course,"

If only Dad knew the things I'd done in

the short span of time he was gone. No. That wasn't worth thinking about.

"Good. I'll call you later tonight. I love you, sweetheart."

"I love you too, Dad. Enjoy yourselves and tell Cecilia hi for me."

"Will do. Talk to you soon." With that, the call ended, and I just stood there, reflecting on how fast things seemed to be moving.

This wasn't exactly my ideal morning after, but it was… something. A whole lot of something I didn't want to deal with. Being around him was dangerous for both of us, that was obvious. Something about him made me weak, and clearly, he wasn't thinking clearly while in front of me either.

This week was looking worse, no matter what kind of thoughts I let play out.

**

I took a quick shower – a cold one to cool myself off, then looked through my

clothes for something decent to wear. All I had were my long dresses, oversized jeans and t-shirts, and pajamas. Dad had insisted that modesty would force anyone who wanted to date me to see me for me, not how I looked. Why hadn't I ever taken Edin up on a shopping trip?

I got dressed and pulled my hair into a ponytail before I headed back into the living room. Levi wasn't there; he was in the kitchen and, by the looks of it, slaving over the stove.

I didn't know what to say to him now after what had happened earlier. If only I had friends to go out with.

He glanced at me, his expression a bit softer this time. "I hope you like omelets."

"Yeah, I do," I said as I moved closer towards the kitchen, taking a seat on the stool.

I sat there and watched as he flipped the omelet, his tattoos on full display on one arm, his hair neatly combed back. He looked good – so sexy that I couldn't help but think back to the previous night when I'd seen his beautiful half-tatted body, every inch being pure muscle.

As handsome as he was, all I could think about was last night. I'd been so lost in my orgasm that I'd only noticed we were really done when I came to and saw him lying next to me.

Then, this morning, he was gone. Telling me we couldn't do it again before kissing me when I yelled. This was a whole lot to deal with on a day that was supposed to be all sunshine and butterflies.

I was so deep in thought that I didn't realize when Levi placed a plate in front of me with toast and an omelet. I glanced up at him.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome," he said as he joined me around the island and began eating his food.

"I don't want anything to change between us, Hayley," he said after a moment, and I paused a little.

"How can it not?" I asked.

"We had sex, and that's a huge thing, but it can't be anything more than that," he said, and I felt a pang in my heart. "I want to think that I made your first time good, set a

bar for what men should do for you ... but continuing this isn't an option if we want to stay sane."

Deep down, I'd already known that, but hearing him say it, felt different. Too heartbreaking.

"Levi, that might have been my first time, but I know how this works; no strings attached." I forced a smile and tried to continue eating my food.

"And that's what you want, right?"

Absolutely not.

I swallowed and met his gaze. "It doesn't matter, like you said. We can't change things. No strings is ... is what it has to be, but don't say it doesn't matter or treat it like it's nothing."

He nodded slowly, his brows furrowing. "Right. We could have a good time, and then after, I move back to New York, and you move on with your life. No relationship, no emotions, no expectations. It's simple."

Saying this was simple was taking it a bit out of hand, but that was who Levi was. He didn't catch feelings; he didn't get attached.

He had his fill, and then he moved on with his life. I knew that coming into this. A part of me knew that if anything were to happen between us, it'd likely be a one-night stand, and that was it.

But him saying so much to me last night, promising me so much … well, it had been in the moment, and I guess I had plenty to learn about guys in general. So, I took a breath. I wouldn't let Levi destroy my desire to try new things. Maybe if I'd had more experiences before Levi, this wouldn't hit so hard.

"Yeah, simple," I said, trying not to break my own heart.

Levi cleared his throat. "So, I found a nice lake this morning on my ride. I was thinking of going back to take a few pictures when the sun goes down."

"Yeah, that sounds great. The lakes are nice here."

"Yeah. Will you come with me?" he said.

"Y- yeah, sounds like fun." Was it always so hard to fake a smile.

Chapter 9

Levi

There was just something about seeing Hayley in her long dresses now that we'd been together. I already knew what she looked like underneath, even if her clothes didn't give away a hint of what her body was really like.

Despite how innocent she seemed, I knew she had more than that. She could be a vixen and had some bite. It was all new to her, that was obvious since one kiss had simmered her down – a kiss I wasn't supposed to take since I'd told her no but hadn't been able to resist when she was so passionate.

I already wanted her again, but I didn't do attachments, and with Hayley, it was even more taboo, seeing that she was Hank's kid. It *had* to be just sex.

The hard part about that was knowing it would come to an end in a few days' time. I'd be back in New York, and Hayley would be

here. It's how it was supposed to be but fuck if making a rule like that didn't immediately make me crave her even more.

I should have been trying my very best to stay away from her. There was this gnawing feeling of guilt anytime I thought of Hank, but I couldn't resist Hayley – I couldn't sit here for the rest of the week not touching her. I didn't have such restraint, I only hoped that at the end of this, I'd have gotten enough of her and be ready to move on with my life.

Later that evening, when it was time to head to the lake, I went to her room and knocked on her door.

"Come in," she answered.

I entered, seeing her perched there on the bed with a book in her hand. She smiled, putting her bookmark in before she placed it to the side.

"Ready?"

"Yeah," she chirped, sliding off the bed.

I climbed onto the motorcycle and handed her the helmet, watching as she strapped it on. She pulled her dress up as she climbed on behind me, her legs exposed when

she sat. I remembered her wrapping her legs around me last night and gripping the handlebars harder.

I positioned my gaze to the road and drove off, trying to remember the path I'd taken to the lake, though there wasn't much I could think about when Hayley was pressed against my back, her warmth radiating through me. Her fingers were intertwined around my stomach, and I had to grit my teeth to stop myself from thinking back to last night.

I never thought I'd enjoy this the way I did. Riding with a woman against my back. Riding on a motorcycle was something I'd done by myself as a way to clear my head and bask in the feeling of freedom.

Being with Hayley only made it more daring.

We parked alongside the road. Hayley hopped off, standing on her feet, gaze already set on the view ahead.

"Wow, it's hard to believe I've lived here all my life but never been here," she said thoughtfully.

"Hard to believe for sure," I said as I

grabbed my knapsack and walked along the narrow path to the lakeside.

It was peacefully empty, everything green and warm despite the setting sun. The lake was stretched out before us, its calm waters reflecting the changing colors of the sky and the trees that stood along the shoreline.

I glanced at Hayley then, the sun casting a gentle glow on her as she looked towards it with the same fascination I felt. The gentle rush of wind blew her dark hair, which looked auburn wherever the sun touched.

I got my camera out of the bag and quickly captured a photo of her. She was so caught up in the view, she didn't notice and only looked when the click of the camera sounded in the silence surrounding us. A huge smile bloomed on her face, and I was lucky to capture it again.

"What are you doing?" she asked, her voice tainted with mirth.

"Capturing the view, what else," I teased.

"Am I in the way?" She asked, stepping

to the side.

"No, but a good model doesn't move unless the photographer says so," I point out.

"Yeah, yeah. Tell that to the sun," she scoffs. "Anyway, there are more stunning things here. Don't waste your time on me."

I couldn't agree, but I kept my mouth shut, instead turning the camera to the lake ahead and snapping a few pictures. The more I took, the more engrossed I became with the beauty of it all. I continued to take pictures, taking random shots of Hayley, who slid her feet in the water, her dress held up by her thighs so it wouldn't get wet.

"Let's take a swim!" I called.

Her head snapped around to face me. "What? The water is cold!"

I shrugged as I kicked off my shoes and pulled my shirt over my head. "I guess we'll warm each other up."

Shock colored her face as I pulled off my pants and tossed them aside.

"Levi," she said in what almost sounded like a whisper – as if someone would overhear. She looked around us. "We could come back

and do this later."

"Your choice, but I'm going in," I said, moving towards her.

"What if someone sees us?" she asked, her voice getting higher.

"Then they'll see two people having a good time," I replied nonchalantly.

"I didn't bring a swimsuit or anything," she said.

"I don't have one," I pointed out, then looked her over. "You don't need one either."

"Levi ..."

"Hayley," I said, nearly reaching for her. "I won't force you. You can keep enjoying the view."

Something flashed over her gaze, something unpleasant, then daring. She glanced around, then quickly pulled her dress over her head, like she was afraid she would change her mind.

She was left in a bra and cotton panties, her pale skin, and I started second guessing my choice. I didn't want anyone else to see her like this. To know exactly how gorgeous she

was.

Hayley hugged her shoulders, that look of familiar shyness on her face. Her gaze flitted to me and held as if I could fix how vulnerable she felt. Whatever it said about me, good or bad, I wanted to.

I cupped her small face in my hands, standing so close our chests nearly brushed. Our gazes held for a brief second before her focus fell to my lips. I knew then what she wanted, and I wasn't keen on waiting for a second longer. I kissed her demandingly, rough and hungry for her as my hands stroked over her neck, along the back of her shoulders, and down to her pert ass, jerking her against me.

She moaned softly and drew back. "I don't know if you're the devil himself or ..."

"You're the angel here," I whispered, giving her ass another squeeze. "Now, stop distracting me and get in the water."

I took her hand, dragging her deeper into the water. She squealed as the water splashed against her skin.

"I'm starting to regret this," she said,

teeth chattering slightly.

"Don't think about it," I advised, taking a dip beneath the ice-cold water.

I pulled Hayley under, and we stayed there. I was mesmerized by her and the way her hair flowed in slow motion beneath the water. She looked like a water nymph.

When we went back up for air, she was breathing heavily, but a smile was on her face, and that was all that mattered.

"How do you feel?" I asked her.

"Good, actually. I've never done anything this wild before," she admitted, clinging onto me.

"Sometimes, taking a risk is fun."

"I'm starting to realize that now."

I kissed her again, wrapping her legs around me. As we renewed each kiss, my cock stirred. As chilly as the water was, my attraction to Hayley was more intense. I wanted her, and I didn't care where we were or how we did it.

I pulled her by the hand towards the shore, which was mainly small pebbles and

grass. She looked confused and wrapped an arm around herself again.

"What are we doing?" she asked, completely oblivious.

"I want you, and I'm not going to wait until we get home."

Her eyes widened. "What? Here? Now?"

I cocked an eyebrow at her. "I'm hard, I can tell you're excited, too, since your bra isn't hiding a thing. Do you want to wait?"

She gnawed her bottom lip until I freed it. "Every time you do that, I want you to know it makes me want to kiss you, to bite your lip myself."

Hayley shuddered and glanced around. "It's not that I want to wait it's just … It's still bright out. Anyone could come here and see us."

"We'll stop if we hear a car, otherwise …" I smirked. "It'll be another good first for you. Why should we start following rules now?"

She tried to hide her smile but failed. "You're definitely the devil."

I grinned, bunching my clothes up to lay my back on. I pulled off my boxers and lay there, gently tugging my cock into my hand and waiting for Hayley to join me.

"If I'm the devil, I can show you how much fun sinning is, angel," I teased.

She laughed lightly. "That's a terrible line." But her eyes stroked over me slowly. "I – I should go on top?"

"I don't want anything poking into your back, so yes. You'll be more comfortable this way."

She swallowed and pulled off her panties, revealing her perfect pussy. Just looking at her was enough to make my mouth water and get me fully hard. Who needed porn when I had her?

Water dripped from her body to mine as she straddled me, hovering just above me like she was worried she was too heavy. She lowered her head and kissed me, my hand gliding down her wet back and over her ass before I slid two fingers between her legs to tease her already slick pussy.

"Slide that pretty pussy over my cock,

Hayley. Get it even wetter to take you," I said in her ear.

She shuddered, but her eyes stayed on me as she obediently lowered herself on me, rubbing her slit over my cock as it pressed against my stomach. She rolled her hips slowly.

"Like this?" She asked between panting breaths.

"Just like that, angel," I agreed, working my fingers deeper inside her as I palmed her breast.

It took restraint to keep from leaning forward to kiss and lick her breasts. I wanted to mark them, to claim her, even if just for this week, as mine.

Hayley adjusted the angle, then moaned, arching her back so her damp hair tumbled down her back. I leaned forward and licked over her hard nipple, sucking it and using my teeth to keep her in place. The more she moved, the more her juices flowed over my cock and fingers. I grunted, my hips flexing involuntarily as a bit of precum oozed from my tip.

I grabbed her by the hips, stopping her. “Ready?”

She glanced down at me, her gaze foggy with lust. Licking her lips, she raised her hips, held my length at the base and slowly lowered herself onto my cock. As soon as the tip impaled her, she gasped, her body stiffening a bit.

“So big,” she hummed as she continued, with my help, until I was buried inside her perfectly tight pussy.

I muttered a curse as my stomach tightened. She felt like a fucking dream, and the little sounds leaving her throat only made it better. She pushed herself up again, sliding off me and then back down, not quite as far.

“That’s right, angel. Show me how much of this cock you can take,” I teased, staring at her agape mouth and the beads of water which trickled from her hair and down her body.

She shivered just as she took me at the hilt. Goosebumps trailed across her pristine skin, and her pussy tried to suck me deeper she waved forward as I licked over her nipple

again and gripped her ass hard.

"Good girl," I praised, lifting my head to graze my lips along hers.

"You're so much deeper, so big," she moaned,

"You're so fucking tight," I hissed, pulling at her hips. She gasped yet again, resting her hands on my shoulders as she chose a slow, lazy pace.

My hands trailed up her sides, enjoying every bit of her body as her cheeks grew pink, and she moved faster, every wet sound of her pussy echoing in my ears along with her moans – the best symphony I'd ever heard.

"Come here," I said greedily, pulling her down to me, her chest crushed against mine.

I wrapped my around her, anchoring her in place and shifted to get the angle right. As I raised my legs a little, I thrust into Hayley from below, my balls slapping against her skin.

She gasped. "Levi!"

"You can take it, Hayles. Let me make you feel good," I growled.

I took her faster, harder, giving up on restraint. Her moans echoed in my ear as she clawed my shoulders, bit my neck, wiggled and rolled her hips against me.

I'd have to tie her up to get her to stay still, but knowing she wanted me this much, that she couldn't settle for me doing everything, was a fucking blessing.

"Yes, Yes, Levi. Right there," she exclaimed.

I jerked her hips into place so I could ram all the way into her each time, pushing myself up onto the ball of my feet as I nibbled her ear and took her the way we both needed.

"You like that, huh?" I said between breaths. "You like it hard and rough… you naughty girl."

"Yes!" she exclaimed loudly just as she started to convulse around me.

She came for me, yelling my name in my ear, gripping me with her legs, her hands, even her pussy, like she couldn't stand the idea of not having me right here, all to herself. She tightened like a vice around my cock, so every thrust had me closer to the edge.

With one more sharp thrust, I came deep inside her as her dripping pussy kept massaging me. I bit her shoulder, softening my groans as I emptied myself inside her.

Even once I finished, my cock twitched inside her, my hips still thrusting involuntarily until it was too much to take. I lifted her, kissing her slowly as I set her on top of me, now empty. I kissed her cheek, kissed her ear, and kept stroking her until her body settled.

“I’m happy,” she sighed.

I gritted my teeth and cursed myself mentally. I knew then that from the first time I kissed Hayley, I’d damned myself to hell.

Chapter 10

Hayley

We lay in bed together after having sex for the second time in one day. My body still buzzed in the aftermath, and I just couldn't seem to take the smile off my face. He'd been here four days now, and neither one of us could barely get enough of the other.

When we did leave the house, he'd ask me what my father would say no to. It didn't matter how silly it was, if we actually went through with it, Levi made it happen. He took me to a quarry where I knew teenagers used to party. Levi tried to teach me how to drive the motorcycle. He let me watch whatever interested me, no matter how naughty (short of porn), we even went on a bar crawl, where I'd try a mouthful of a drink before handing it to him.

I couldn't believe this was who I was now! I'd started going on adventures, started

embracing what *I* wanted to do, and honestly, I didn't understand why my dad was so afraid of the world. Not when there was so much to see and do!

And I wanted it all as much as I wanted Levi, which was saying something.

"Go to your room, not the couch," I murmured, knowing I was close to sleep.

Levi kissed me on the forehead and eased up from the bed. "That's why we ended up in your bed."

He didn't do the cuddling, and as many times as we had sex, he never stayed for longer than ten minutes. It was heartbreaking in a way, but it let me clean up, so I felt clean and cozy before bed. Plus, I knew cuddling would open too many doors to emotions that would complicate us. However, he didn't know that I already had feelings for him.

"Could you stay and talk?" I asked, sitting up and playing with my fingers. "Like, we can clean up and have a snack and … talk?"

He paused, turning to look back at me. "What do you want to talk about?"

“We spent all day talking about me and what was going on around us,” I murmured, thinking of our adventure out of the house. “But I don’t know much about your past.”

He seemed to mull it over in his head for a second before a ghostly smile tugged at his lips. He climbed back further into the bed, and my heart lurched with happiness.

“Okay. Get through a shower and think of some questions,” he murmured. “Also ... I need to give you something.”

I considered that, smiled, and got out of bed. Levi’s jaw clenched as he looked me over, taking a slow breath as he shook his head. I got through a shower – alone – and went downstairs. Levi sat there with drinks and some junk food.

“So, how did you get into photography?” I asked while still toweling my hair.

He took a swig of beer. “When I was younger, my dad had one of those retro cameras. I was always intrigued by it, and rather than teaching me to fix cars, he taught me how to use the camera ...” He trailed off

with a smile. “It was time just for us. When I headed off to college, he gave me one as a gift. That was the last time I saw him.” His voice broke at the end, but he quickly cleared his throat. My heart broke for him, knowing what I knew. Levi’s father had died in a car crash.

“That’s why you never came back to Portland?” I asked.

He raked his hands through his hair. “I couldn’t. All I had were painful memories of people I’d lost. I felt totally alone without my parents.”

“Levi, I’m sorry,” I said softly.

He reached for my hand and gave it a gentle squeeze. “No need to be. Life happens; you lose people. What matters is the memories you make.”

He meant what he said, but I could still read the pain in his eyes. Levi had had a lot of losses in his life, and I couldn’t help but wonder if that was why he was the way he was now. Distant and afraid to commit. Was he afraid he’d lose his family if he ever tried to have one?

“What made you choose accounting?”

he asked, pulling me from my thoughts.

"It was stable and simple. I guess I've always wanted a job that ended when I left the office, unlike my dad. Accounting pays well, so I can travel eventually, be stable but also free when I'm off the clock."

Levi rubbed his hand along my leg, leaving a trail of goosebumps in the wake. "You're smarter than people give you credit for."

My cheeks stung. I didn't know how to take that compliment. "Um, you said you had something for me."

"Yes. I know it's kind of late, but I didn't ask about birth control. I got you the morning after pill. You deserve a full future, and I want you to have it without worries."

I stared at the pill in his hand, shrugged and took it. I wasn't the best at taking my birth control right on time, so hopefully, this would take care of any 'oops'.

"I don't know how I'll enter the dating pool after this – how I'll be with anyone else," I said after a long moment of silence.

Levi's grip suddenly tightened on my

knee, his head snapping towards me. My heart lurched in my chest when I saw the expression on his face. Dark and cold, more intense and demanding than I'd ever seen.

"What?" I asked breathlessly. "In a few days, you're going-"

The muscles visibly flexed in his jaw. "You're mine, Hayley."

My heart skipped a couple of beats, a gasp escaping my lips at his words. His voice was low; each was a punctuation as they left his lips. My mouth opened and closed.

No. He was just turned on. It was better to ignore it. So, I cleared my throat. "I am right now. I mean, you mentioned the future and-"

"And I'd rather drag you to New York and lock you up inside my house than even think about letting another man touch you," he snarled.

I just gaped at him. *He* was the one who said he didn't want to get attached, that this was no strings. I'd accepted my own heartbreak, but he wasn't allowed to do this.

"Stop," I said sharply.

He stood up, heading to the stares. “Fuck, forget it!”

I followed. “You realize there’s a limit on my ability to forget, right? You don’t just get to command it and make it happen.”

“I just did,” he snapped, and I paused in place, gawking at him.

“What’s gotten into you!” I demanded, feeling as tears pricked the back of my eyes. “I can’t take the back and forth. No strings, then you say things like that. No cuddling, but we can’t talk about the future. Fun days out, and then another fight. I can’t take not knowing where you stand.”

He stopped abruptly, glaring at me with deadly eyes. In one swift movement, he was standing in front of me, hovering like a beast, while I craned my neck to look up at him.

“You’re crazy if you think I’ll allow another man to touch you the way I have. To take you over and over again, hearing your moans as you beg me for more.”

My heart was sprinting in my chest. “I-”

He cut my words short when he turned me around, my hands bracing on the wall as

my ass rubbed his crotch. I gasped, my body catching fire. More so when Levi cupped my breasts with one hand and lowered his head to my ear.

"You'll never forget my name or forget what I make you feel. I'll make damn sure that I'm the only person you *want* touching you." His hand trailed it down my stomach.

When he slid his hand under the oversized shirt I was wearing to cup my pussy, I shuddered. I felt his cock hardening, throbbing just above my ass. I blinked a few times as Levi rubbed my clit before he slipped his finger inside my pussy. My eyes fluttered, and a low moan left my throat.

His hand that had been palming my breast gripped my hair, jerking back so I was arched against him. He bit my ear and rubbed his hard-on against me. "You're mine, Hayley."

Desire spiraled through me even as his hand moved from my hair to my throat, squeezing lightly. "That's what's important. As long as you're mine, you don't talk about other guys touching you the way I do."

Another squeeze, and then he spanked me. “Say yes.”

“Yes, Levi,” I rasped.

He put his wet fingers in front of my mouth. “No one else gets you wet like I do, makes you come like I do. I’ll prove it over and over again.”

I sucked his fingers obediently, so overwhelmed by this side of him, I couldn’t think straight. He jerked his hand away, swatted my ass again; then I heard him loosen his pajama pants.

“Spread your legs,” he ordered, swatting my ass again when I didn’t comply right away.

A needy moan left my lips as I obeyed. All it took was one thrust, and he was inside me, stretching me, filling me until my toes curled.

My pussy clenched around him, and he plowed into me deeper, harder, making me wail. Every other round of sex had been gentle compared to this. His teeth dug into my shoulder, his huge hand on my throat, every thrust driving my hips and breasts against the wall in front of me.

“Do you want someone else fucking you? Someone else touching you now?” He demanded.

My lips parted to answer but moaned instead.

“Answer me,” he insisted, punctuating each word with a sharp thrust of his cock and tight squeeze of my throat.

“No!” I exclaimed.

My legs shook as some kind of pleasure-high clouded my mind.

Levi jerked out of me, using my throat to guide me to the couch and bent me over the arm of it. He pushed on my lower back and swatted me again. “That’s fucking right, angel. You’re mine because you want to be.”

He impaled me with his length once again, driving himself to the hilt, gripping my ass hard in one hand while bunching my hair in the other. All I could do was moan, grip the couch, and welcome his cock. Levi didn’t hold back, he plunged into me over and over, sounding like a beast behind me as he groaned and grunted. My pussy burned from the intensity of his thrusts, but I liked the mix of

pain and pleasure. In fact, I loved it.

"Yes, faster, please," I begged as the tears pricked my eyes.

Levi obliged, pounding me hard, growling and grunting as I bounced against him. His hand pulled my head up, so every sound leaving my throat was free in the living room instead of muffled against the couch.

"Say you're mine," he commanded.

"I'm yours!" I wailed, my voice rising as a bolt of pleasure crashed into me.

My scream echoed in the room, my walls clamping down on Levi's huge cock. Levi jerked out of me, and I felt something warm spurt across my ass and lower back. I shuddered and sighed, delirious, exhausted, and totally overwhelmed.

My feet still dangled, my ass felt raw from his spanking, my throat hurt slightly, but I'd never felt more satisfied in my life. I closed my eyes as I hummed, not caring if I fell asleep right now.

That was exactly what happened; I couldn't remember a thing after that thought.

Chapter 11

Levi

I didn't know what came over me. I'd been a man possessed as soon as I heard the words leave Hayley's lips. The thought of her being with someone else made me see red. She was mine. Her smile, her adventurous side, her laugh, her moans, her body, her heart – I didn't want to share any of it with anyone else.

It was fucking selfish; I knew that now that the fog had cleared from my head. Reality was, Hayley couldn't be mine – not in the way that mattered anyway. It wouldn't work; it couldn't. So, she was right, after I left here, we'd both go back to our world, and I'd have to find a way to cope with the fact that, as time passed, she'd find someone else and make a life and a family like she dreamed.

My hand tightened around the glass of ice-cold water I'd been drinking, and anger

rose inside my chest, tightening until I thought I'd explode. A loud pop echoed. It took me an embarrassingly long second to realize that I'd broken the glass in my hands and cut myself in the process.

"Fuck!" I muttered, watching my palm bleed before going to the sink.

Hayley lifted her head from where she slept on the couch, wide blue eyes on me before she jumped up at the sight of blood.

"What happened?" she asked, getting me soap.

"I don't know. I…" I trailed off, knowing I couldn't possibly tell her what I was thinking. I'd already said too much earlier. Stupid empty promises and threats.

"There's a first aid kit around here somewhere. Hold on a sec," she said as I worked on drying the room.

She pulled the small kit from a cabinet, sighing gently before she turned to me.

"It's really nothing," I said. "Just a small cut."

She didn't seem interested in a thing I had to say and instead reached for my hand as

she sat beside me on the sofa. She focused entirely on the gash across my palm and the few cuts on my fingers.

"You should be more careful," she said as she applied disinfectant.

I didn't say anything. Just watched as she treated my wounds. Drying, applying Neosporin, Band-Aids, gauze. It reminded me of my mother – how she'd scold me as a child but tried her best to make me a better man. I found myself smiling as I looked down at Hayley. She was in one of my t-shirts, her beautiful legs on display. Her hair cascaded freely down her back. I felt a pang in my heart that caught me off guard.

Taken aback, I pulled my hand away, but it was just in time. Hayley had just finished.

"Is everything okay?" She asked softly while repacking the first aid kit and grabbing the garbage.

"Yeah, I … I think I need to go for a ride."

Her eyes twinkled. "Can I come with?"

I was tempted to say yes, but I needed

to think. Having her there would be counterproductive. “I’m sorry, not this time. I need to clear my head.”

I did my best to ignore her disappointment, tried to remember how easy that used to be when it came to women in general.

“Oh, okay,” she murmured, “Please be safe. The roads are still wet from the rain earlier.”

I got up, and without another word headed for the garage where the motorcycle was parked. As soon as I hit the road, I sighed, wondering how I’d managed to ruin myself in less than a week.

**

The ride that was supposed to clear my head only dragged up more thoughts of Hayley. What was happening to me? I knew I’d started to develop feelings for this girl – someplace inside me that escaped my control had sparked with some kind of desire I thought I’d snuffed out. Feelings were off-

limits, it was something I didn't do. Yet here I was.

I cursed myself every single day, telling myself it was a mistake and that I shouldn't have gotten involved. But as soon as I saw her, every ounce of logic disappeared like a grain of sugar in the ocean. I felt like I was losing my grip on the person I was.

No matter how good the sex was, I'd never got attached, barely even went back for repeats. I just kept it moving forward, but now here I was with Hayley, and I couldn't seem to get her out of my head or my bed.

The thought of leaving for New York, knowing that I wouldn't see her again for a while, made me feel awful, but there was no wiggle room.

We couldn't work even if I stayed, and Hayley deserved more than good sex. She deserved love and the family she wanted, and I couldn't give her that. Those things were off-limits to me. She deserved the world, and all I could give her was half of me, if that.

Angry at my thoughts and angry at myself, I turned and headed into town. I

stopped by the place we'd stopped for food when she'd picked me up from the airport. So much had changed since then.

I ordered us some food, knowing that Hayley liked burgers as much as I did. It was her most requested food the last few days.

"No tomatoes," I made sure to tell the cashier as I got my order in.

After receiving it, I headed back to the house, watching Hayley's eyes light up as soon as she saw the paper bag in my hand. I smiled.

"You brought food," she said as she bounded towards me, taking it from my hand.

"Yeah, I was thinking we could watch a movie, too – finish off the night."

She nodded but watched me carefully, like she wasn't sure what to expect.

Join the club, angel.

**

Sometime later, we were huddled up against the sofa, watching the credits started to roll, and I realized that Hayley had fallen

asleep.

"Hayley," I said, gently trying to wake her.

She didn't respond. I turned the TV off and picked her up, carrying her to her bedroom. I stared down at her sleep-softened face, her long eyelashes creating shadows across her face while her hair swung beneath her. There was no way to describe her beauty, and each day, I found myself being more and more fascinated by her. Tomorrow, I'd be headed back to New York, and it wasn't close to ready to leave her. A painful lump formed in my throat.

I placed her down gently on the bed and pulled her blankets over her, watching the way she snuggled up to her pillows. I placed a gentle kiss on her forehead and headed towards the door.

I paused when I heard the sound of my name, the grogginess of Hayley's voice and the innocence in her tone doing something to the rhythm of my heart.

I looked back, despite knowing better.

"Stay?" She asked softly.

I swallowed hard, not wanting to give in to her request, but how could I say no when tomorrow loomed so large?

I nodded, moving towards her, pausing to pull off my pants. I joined her beneath the blankets, spooning her small body against mine. She wriggled a little, making herself comfortable. She was asleep in a matter of minutes. I lay there with my eyes wide open, adding this to my ever-growing list of mistakes. But the longer I stayed, and the more I felt Hayley's soft body pressed against mine, the more it felt ... right. Her hair smelt like strawberries, her body like warm vanilla. She felt food against me even when it wasn't for sex.

Before I even realized it, I fell asleep, too, with Hayley in my arms.

I'd given Hayley plenty of firsts, and now she was returning the favor.

Chapter 12

Hayley

I knew what today was, I just didn't want to accept it. I didn't even want to open my eyes to make my reality more daunting. I was still cuddled against Levi, his big arms wrapped around me as he held me in place. His soft snores echoed in my ear, and his breath flicked up my hair, causing it to tickle my cheeks. I felt warm and safe in his grasp. I didn't want the moment to end.

The sun was already peeking through the curtains, a clock I couldn't turn off or stop. He had a 2pm flight.

I was mourning our time together already. I'd never felt more alive in my entire life than I did in the few days Levi was here. I did things I hadn't dreamt of doing and felt things I'd only read about in books. When he left, my dad would return. No more motorcycle rides or lessons, no more

adventures beyond our town, no more sex or excitement or freedom.

Levi was leaving, and so was every bit of the fun I'd claimed for myself.

To take my mind off the painful lump forming in my throat, I slowly turned to face him. His eyes were still closed, his handsome face gentle and approachable in sleep.

I leaned in and kissed him gently. His eyelashes fluttered before his hazel eyes slowly opened to look at me. He brushed his thumb over my cheek, tucking a few loose tendrils of hair behind my ear.

"Good morning," he said, his voice slightly groggy.

"Good morning," I said, feeling a light flutter in my stomach.

Levi kissed me feverishly, his tongue exploring my mouth as if it was truly the last time he'd do it. The realization that it might be made my throat constrict. But I kissed him back with just as much need, basking in every second of it.

As our tongues met and tangled, heat pooled in my core. Levi's hands trailed down

my sides and around my ass, gripping and palming, dragging me closer. I moaned softly, reaching down to graze my fingers over his cock. He was hard already, which was no surprise.

Levi broke the kiss and pushed the blanket to the side, then he pulled his shirt over his head. His boxers went next. I hastily tossed the shirt I'd been wearing.

He drank me in with his gaze, his fingers, then his mouth, kissing across my chest, licking across my skin. My hands roamed the muscular build of his bank, grazing his firm ass.

"I want you inside me, now," I pleaded while widening my legs. I almost said, 'one more time', but after the fight yesterday, I didn't want to spoil the moment.

He kissed a path along my neck, his cock brushing against my lower belly. He adjusted the angle and pressed himself to my opening, rubbing against me teasingly before he slipped inside of me. He moaned with me as he slid all the way in, filling me slowly, completely, as if he was consuming me.

Having him inside me was the most amazing feeling –I was over the moon yet overwhelmed all at once. He knew just the right places to hit, but this time, he wasn't pounding inside me roughly; he was moving gently, each stroke meaningful and tapping on every single one of my nerve endings. *This* wasn't just sex. I knew it from the way he moved, how he watched me, his too-soft touches.

My fingers traced the contours of his back, gliding down to his ass. As the arousal spurred inside me, I pressed my hand against his ass, urging him, urging him to go deeper. He did, and just as he started to hit that sweet spot repeatedly, I wrapped my legs around his back and anchored him there. Levi grunted, his cock slightly twitching inside me as he tried to move with the little space I allowed him.

He didn't say a word, didn't give one order, only whispered my name into my hair as he made love to me, stroking me, petting my hair, rolling on top of me and bringing me to the sweetest, most beautiful orgasm yet.

He paused, not moving but still buried

deep. He lifted his head a little, kissed my lips and my cheeks, and then he stiffened as my pussy tightened around him.

He jerked out of me at the last second, but I didn't want him to come on me. I wanted to give him one more of my firsts. So I wrapped my lips around him and took his cock as deep into my mouth as I could.

He groaned, thrust deeper into my mouth, and filled my throat with his release. I slowly drew back, licking and swallowing, then kissing up his body as I hugged him.

Levi kissed me one last time before he rolled to the side, a gaping emptiness opening inside my chest.

This was it.

**

I wished time would stand still forever, so Levi would be stuck here.

We'd both showered and changed into some clean clothes, Levi's bags already packed by the door. My throat burned when I thought

about it, but I wouldn't fight with him, I wouldn't cry. He had made it clear from the start that we were done when he left.

Still, I couldn't help but think back to when he'd called me his, fucked me so good that I even had to admit it. How could I be his when I was going to be left alone here and forced to move on with my life?

I bit my lip, watching him as he put on his shoes. "What did you mean when you said I was yours?"

Levi paused what he was doing, turning towards me. He gritted his teeth. "I don't know what came over me. It must have been the heat of the moment."

"Right, well, I guess that's that," I said dryly. Did he really think I couldn't *hear* the lie?

"Nothing has changed since we agreed this was no-strings," he said sternly.

"Liar," I hissed. So much for not fighting.

His dark brows furrowed as he stood. "Where is all this coming from? I thought we were on the same page."

“I didn’t think you’d lie to me so blatantly. I didn’t think you’d avoid a fight or conversation or whatever by fucking me yesterday. Everything I said is still up in the air,” I bit back.

“What do you want me to say, Hayley?” he asked, his voice a bit louder.

“The truth! That you want to be with me!” I blurted, my eyes blurring with tears.

He froze, his eyes wide as he glowered at me. “I can’t – you know that.”

“Can’t or won’t?” I snapped.

“What do you want me to do, Hayley? Stay here, admit to my best friend that we fucked,” he shrugged nonchalantly. “Start a family and build a happy home. Is that what you want?”

Yes! I wanted to shout but knew that would never happen with the way Levi talked so casually about it. “I’m not stupid. I know that’s not going to happen, Levi. I’m just tired of you pretending that this was nothing when you know it was more, when *we* know it was more.”

“It can’t be.” He said, holding my gaze

like he could make me understand.

"Because you *won't* be the man you could be," I accused. "Because you're so afraid of losing something and getting hurt that you'd rather take the easy way. Got it."

"Don't do this," he sighed. "This doesn't have to be dramatic or hard, Hayley. We enjoyed this week – mistake or not. We have the memories and-"

"One day, you'll realize memories aren't worth shit when you could have more. But fine. You go back to your life, telling everyone you're not lonely. I'll figure out how to escape my dad, I'll move across the country if I have to. I'll get a job, travel, explore, try everything, and every day, I'll forget you a little more," I say seriously. "Maybe, when I'm dealing with break ups or a little lonely, I'll enjoy our memories until those are gone, too."

Levi watched me for a long moment, like he wasn't sure what to say, wasn't sure where I got the backbone to talk to him like that. Then he swallowed and looked away. "I'll meet you at the motor shop. I have to drop the bike off."

He walked off, leaving me there. My lips trembled, and even more tears threatened to fall, but I sucked it up and did what I was supposed to do. I drove behind Levi until he dropped the bike at the shop. He joined me in the passenger seat, silent.

The whole ride to the airport was silent, but the tension could be cut with a knife. I gripped the steering wheel hard and turned up the music anytime he took a deep breath. I didn't want to talk anymore. I didn't even want to look at him.

When we finally arrived at the airport, Levi took his things from the back and stood before me in the parking lot.

"This is it," he said, watching me like he was expecting a hug or a smile. "Thank you for having me."

I cleared my throat. "Yeah."

He took a step forward and cupped my cheek with his one hand, his thumb brushing against it, and my stupid self couldn't or wouldn't pull away. "I'll see you around, Hayley."

I finally stepped back. "Have a safe

flight.”

He smiled sadly and looked me over. I felt my throat tighten when he started to say something, but instead, he just hefted his bag over his shoulder and nodded once, turning around and disappearing into the crowd.

I didn’t stay to see if he’d look back. I wasn’t going to be the weak one. I had to move forward. If there was one thing Levi had taught me above all others, it was that. Move forward or life will pass you by. Unlike him, I wasn’t going to cling to memories until they felt more real than the future.

Chapter 13

Hayley

When I got home, the house felt different. I hated it and wanted to run upstairs and cry. I wanted to do something to get out every emotion I couldn't fully push down.

So I cleaned. I tried to push away every memory of being in Levi's bed as I changed the sheets, ignoring the memories of us on the couch as I vacuumed it and fluffed the pillows. I fought every memory of us and focused on the fun I'd had escaping the house, doing what I wanted, answering to no one.

As I waited for the laundry to finish, I realized I'd removed every trace of Levi from the house, but some part of him was still here. The leather jacket tucked deep into one of my drawers because he insisted on me having it for riding.

Swallowing as many of the tears down as I could, I went and showered, scrubbing

myself until the water turned cold as I cried. It didn't count as crying if no one saw ... right?

**

A day later, my dad and Cecilia returned, a little sunburned but with huge smiles. My dad dropped his suitcase as soon as he saw me and opened his arms for a hug. Like a sad little girl, I walked into his arms and accepted the hug, trying my best to keep a practiced smile in place.

"I missed you," he said.

"I missed you, too, Dad. It's good to have you both back," I said as I pulled away and glanced at Cecilia, who was almost glowing with joy.

"Your dad and I had a great time!" Cecilia gushed.

"That's great!" I exclaimed.

"I didn't realize how much fun it would be to step away from work and focus on the moment," Dad said dreamily.

"I told you, going out and experiencing

the world isn't such a bad thing," Cecilia said pointedly.

My dad chuckled before he leaned in and kissed her briefly on the cheek. "Mmm. So, Hayley, how was your house guest?"

"He was the usual Levi. We didn't do much. Mostly TV and takeouts when he was around and not exploring," I lied.

Dad smiled. "I bet he spent more time riding that motorcycle he rented."

"Yeah, he went to take some photos, too, I guess," I agreed.

"I'm just glad you're in one piece," he winked.

I managed a brief smile, glancing at Cecilia, who I realized was staring at me. She smiled right away, reaching out to rub my hand.

"Well, I'm gonna take these to the bedroom. We could maybe order dinner?" Dad said.

I immediately nodded. "Yeah, dinner sounds good."

Dinner consisted of Cecilia and my dad talking about their trip, making sure not to leave out a single detail. As interested as I was, I couldn't help but zone out a few times, my mind taking me back to Levi and my days of freedom.

"Someday, you'll find your person, Hayley," Cecilia said, grabbing my attention.

I looked up from my takeout box and glanced at her, managing a smile. "Maybe one day."

"A nice, quiet gentleman who will marry you and treat you the best, but, of course, you're too young for marriage," Dad dismissed. "Plus, it will take some searching to find someone good enough for you."

I pulled in a breath.

"I'm sure Hayley is old enough to make her own decisions – whatever that means for her," Cecilia said.

"She only reached the legal drinking age a few months ago. I'm sure Hayley doesn't know what's best for her at this age," Dad dismisses.

I dropped my fork on the plate. "Dad,

I'd appreciate it if you didn't talk about me as if I wasn't in the room."

He seemed taken aback, leaning back in my chair and staring at me as if I'd lost my mind. I felt close to losing it.

"Young lady, watch your tone," he scolded, a frown on his face.

"May I be excused, please?" I asked, already pushing my chair back to stand.

My dad opened his mouth to talk, but Cecilia beat him to it. "Sure."

With that, I got up from the chair and left the table, strolling to my room and closing the door behind me. I clearly couldn't go back to doing whatever my dad said, accepting life as it came. I needed to make a life for myself the way I wanted, even if that meant upsetting my father.

Chapter 14

Hayley

6 weeks later

At first, I didn't think it was anything, that I was just late because I was stressed, but I was moody, and tense and over the questions about why I hadn't started my period when I should have two weeks ago.

I left for the store one morning when my dad had left for work, though Cecilia was still at the house. She didn't ask questions, which I liked, so it was easy for me to get out, grab a few things and not worry about being interrogated like some delinquent.

My hands trembled as I reached for the pregnancy kit in the store. Seeing it and thinking about it made things feel even more real. My stomach was in knots, and I didn't think it would be positive. I took the pill Levi gave me, and I'd been better about my birth

control, but I needed to *know*.

It wasn't entirely impossible for me to be pregnant since Levi and I never used protection. I'd just assumed we were fine. I took the pills, even at different times, but … I was late.

Was I really going to have a future where I could put myself first? A life of adventure? I was still living with my dad, and I couldn't be pregnant. I *couldn't*.

If I was, I knew my dad would never talk to me again. I didn't know what I'd do since Levi would want nothing to do with it. He hadn't even called me since he left. The only time I heard mention of him was when my dad announced he had safely made it back to New York.

As hard as it had been to accept, I'd come to terms with it. He had made it clear that he wasn't going to commit. He didn't want a family, and he just wanted to live life in the moment. So, I'd just accepted it and moved on. All his comments about being 'his' were empty, in the moment, and whatever fantasy he'd had about keeping me was just a

fantasy. Which meant he wouldn't want anything to do with a baby if I was, in fact, pregnant.

With a sigh, I grabbed the kit from the shelf and dashed towards the cashier, happy that no one else was in the line. I paid and hurried out, hoping no one would notice or bother to remember.

When I got home, Cecilia was in the living room on her laptop. She barely glanced my way, a smile on her face as she worked. "I didn't expect you back so soon."

"Yeah," I said, already moving to my room.

"Hey, I was thinking about cooking something later. How does chicken pasta sound?"

"Yeah, sounds great," I said.

"Hayley?"

With that, I shut the door to my room, threw my tote bag onto the bed and pulled out the kit. I slipped into the bathroom, my hands starting to shake again as I prepared myself.

I placed it on the counter once I was done and waited with bated breath for the

results. It felt like my heart was closer and closer to exploding with every passing second. My hands were sweaty, and I nearly stripped because I felt so hot. I stared at the timer.

I raked my fingers through my hair and paced the room repeatedly, trying to talk myself into a calm. I glanced at my watch, realized it was time and froze, afraid to turn around to see the results.

When I finally did, my heart lurched in my chest, the breath pausing in my throat as my mouth fell open. Instantly feeling weak, I dropped to my knees and broke out a sob, covering my face with my palms and crying into my hands.

It was positive.

No. No. I pulled out the second test and went through the process again. False positives were possible, right? I'd heard about them. But when the second test said positive, too, I nearly collapsed.

I was pregnant.

Levi was the father.

I didn't know how long I stayed there, I'd wanted a family, wanted to be a mom, but

this wasn't how I wanted it. I didn't want to do it alone. To explain to my father, to have to give up everything when I had no one to help.

Levi had already made up his mind. He didn't want a family, and he no longer wanted me. The betrayal my father would feel after hearing this would be too much. It would be catastrophic.

I had to get out of here. I grabbed the tests from the sink and the box, not leaving any traces for my dad. I bolted through the door, coming to a halt, a gasp leaving my lips when I crashed into someone. The test fell from my hands, crashing to the floor.

My heart in my mouth, I looked up and found Cecilia there, by some chance of miracle, hoping she wouldn't see the obvious.

"Oh, sorry," she said, her eyes moving to the floor to look at what had fallen. Bile rose to the back of my throat as I watched her expression, her eyes widening before they snapped back to me.

I quickly scrambled to pick it up, feeling slightly dizzy from being so overwhelmed.

"Oh, my God, Hayley. Are you?" she

asked me, her widened eyes searching my face for the answer.

Tears welled in my eyes. “Promise me you won’t tell Dad. Please… at least until I’m ready.”

She nodded right away. “Yes, of course. I’m here for you, Hayley. Whatever you decide to do, okay? I won’t let you be alone.”

“Thank you,” I cried.

“Is – Is it Levi’s?” she asked, catching me by surprise.

“How do you know that?” I croaked, my shoulders dropped.

“I saw the way you looked when we got back, how you’d react when your father mentioned his name. Plus, according to your father, you’ve gotten a little feisty.” She smiled at that, then pulled me into her arms.

“He’s going to kill me,” I said.

“Your father loves you more than anything in this world, Hayley. And while he may be upset at first, I’m sure he’ll come around,” she whispers. “I’ll put my foot down, too. This is your choice, whatever you do with this new … twist.

I sniffed. “You’re too optimistic.”

She gently squeezed me. “He’ll see reason.”

I tried to brush the tears away, even though there was no stopping them. “Promise me you won’t tell him.”

“I’ll give you as much time as you need, but you’ll have to tell him eventually.”

I nodded. “Yeah, I will.”

She adjusted my hair and helped me pick up the garbage. “Let’s put this in the garbage and take it out, okay? Then we’ll get you some food because you definitely need it and go from there.”

“Thanks, Cecilia.”

I let her cook for me, we talked a bit – not about Levi or the pregnancy but just talked – and I realized exactly how great of a person she was. When she wasn’t overwhelmingly happy, she was supportive and warm and made me feel safe, even though I was worried she was being too optimistic about Dad.

I didn’t know how I’d even look him in the face when he got home. My dad always

held me to such a high standard. This would rip him to shreds.

When I heard Dad come home, I ran upstairs. I just needed some time to think, to cool off, to travel. I called Enid and learned that she wasn't too far away, in Seattle now, partying and having fun, so I asked if I could come to her after spilling everything quietly.

I knew I couldn't run from this, but I also couldn't handle it. So, once Cecilia and my dad were talking about something, I snuck out with a packed bag, got in my car, and headed to my best friend, hoping to put off hell for a little longer.

Chapter 15

Levi

"A little bit more to the right…yeah… yes, that's perfect," I instructed, taking a step back to admire my latest gallery piece.

It was one of the candids I'd taken of Hayley when she was looking towards the lake, the warm ray of the sunset hitting her ivory skin while her hair and dress flowed in the wind. It still took my breath away each time I saw it, and after looking at it every single day since I'd been back, I'd finally decided it would be perfect in my gallery.

"Someone special?" the handyman asked as he stepped down from the step stool.

"Yes," I confirmed, not even thinking about it.

"Beautiful," he nodded before he went on his way.

I stared at the photo for a moment longer before I went to my office to get my

things. I headed out after, taking a long ride on my motorcycle to get some food before riding through busy New York traffic and heading home.

The empty house welcomed me yet again, and for the hundredth time since being back here, I felt lonely. Each time I'd stepped back into my apartment after leaving Portland, I'd heard Hayley's words. I was lonely. Maybe I'd stopped feeling it or grown numb to it, but it was utterly true.

All the 'freedom' I loved felt empty, pointless. Especially when I was stuck in my house doing a whole lot of nothing. With a deep sigh, I plopped down on the sofa, switched the TV on and took the food from the bag. It was a burger – my comfort food.

One single bite brought me back to Portland, flashes of me and Hayley perched on the sofa flashing through my head. She'd eat her tomato-less burger, beaming with every bite.

Fuck, I missed her.

It had taken me a long time to admit it, but there was no point in pretending I hadn't

left with feelings. Every day was worse, especially at night when I wanted to feel her pressed against me, fucking me, or cuddling me. It would be easy to get a female in my bed every night, but I just couldn't bring myself to do it. Hayley was the only one I wanted.

Maybe she'd been right about me being afraid to lose someone I loved again. Love felt like a trap, a way to chain myself to someone who could disappear at any second, and I never wanted to stand at another funeral, never wanted to get a call saying someone I loved was gone.

Maybe it really just made me a weak, lonely, frustrated person, though. I'd been snappy since I got back, quick to anger, and more exhausted than I thought possible.

I reached for my phone, almost calling Hayley, her name right there ... right under Hanks. Groaning, I locked my phone and shook my head. I couldn't face my best friend's wrath.

Not even for Hayley, apparently.

Hayley, who deserved the world, deserved a whole lot better than a coward.

**

The following morning, I got dressed for work and was about to head out when my phone rang. My brows raised a little when I saw Hank's name.

"Hey –"

"Where is she?!" he barked, taking me by surprise.

"What? Hank –"

"Where is Hayley?!" he exclaimed, anger evident in his voice. My head reeled with questions.

"What – I don't know what you're talking about. Is Hayley missing?" my stomach dipped upon hearing the words.

"Don't fucking ... asshole. How could you even do this to me?" he spat. "I considered you a best friend, a best man. I welcomed you in my home with my only child, and this is what you do to me?"

I swallowed, wondering how he even figured out my secret with Hayley. Regardless,

I was more concerned about his first question than anything else.

"Hank, I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Fuc – she left home, and it has to be with you. She doesn't know anyone else, for God's sake!" He bellowed. "Let me talk to her! Tell me she's safe. I can be angry, I can't ...."

I raked my hand through my hair. "she's not here."

"Where else could she go? She's fucking pregnant!" he hissed, and my head spun. I reached blindly for the sofa, feeling along the arms before I took a seat.

"W-What?" I doubted he even heard me.

"You took advantage of my girl, and you didn't even have the decency to protect yourself. What type of man are you? I swear if I ever see you again, I'm gonna fucking kill you, Levi. You'd better make sure my daughter is in one piece because I'll ruin your pathetic life if she isn't!"

With that, he hung up, and I sat there, my eyes searching the floor as I tried to process everything I'd heard. I couldn't believe

it.

Pregnant? Hayley was pregnant?

That … it was possible, but she'd taken the pill. She'd told me at some point she was on birth control. We should have been fine. I would have called, I would have … why didn't she tell me?

"Fuck," I muttered under my breath, tossing my phone to the side. "Why would she tell me when I shut her down while there? She wouldn't call me if her life was on the fucking line."

Because she hates me, lost that shiny smile she used to give me, sent me off while barely civil after our fight. Our fight where she'd been right at every turn, and I'd been a horny, lying, cowardly bastard.

I paced the room, expecting the anger or panic to sweep in. Instead, I only felt fear. The world couldn't lose someone as smart, sweet, kind … loving as her. I couldn't lose her.

I had to find her. I had to be with her.

I called my assistant. "Hey, Sophie, I need you to get me on the first available flight to Portland, ASAP."

“Okay, boss.”

As soon as I hung up, I went to my bedroom and packed a bag, waiting to hear back from Sophie. Seeing me was definitely the last thing Hank wanted right now, but while I felt horrible for betraying my best friend, we’d have to suck it up, so we could find Hayley.

She was my number one priority, and I wouldn’t forgive myself if anything happened to her… or our baby.

Chapter 16

Levi

I had an Uber drop me off at Hank's the following day. I got out with a sigh, thinking back to memories I made here less than two months ago. Now, I was preparing for war.

I made my way towards the front door, and just as I was about to ring the doorbell, it opened. Hank's red, angry face was the first thing I saw before his fist hit my jaw.

I stumbled backwards and held my hand to my mouth, wiping a speck of blood from my busted lip.

"You have some nerve showing your face here!" Hank shouted as he lunged towards me again. This time, I sited his punch, causing him to stumble a little, almost falling before he quickly caught himself. He growled. "Fight me like a man!"

"Look, Hank, I don't want to fight," I said, holding my hands out in a sign of

surrender.

"Get the hell out of here before I call the cops!" he shouted, pointing an accusatory finger at my face.

Just then, Cecilia came out, running to his side. "What is going on!"

"I'm here to help find Hayley," I said to her.

"Help find her? You're the reason she's even in this mess!" Hank spat. "Some fuckin friend you are!"

"Sounds like you're the one she was running from," I remarked, not thinking twice about the reply.

Hank's face nearly went purple, his mouth in a grim line. He was about to bolt towards me again, but Cecilia caught his arm. "Can we all just behave like adults here? Hayley should be our only concern."

Hank brushed the back of his hand across his nose and moved towards the house. He pointed at me, said nothing at all, and then took a breath.

"I don't want him in my fucking house," he grumbled before he went inside and closed

the door behind him.

Cecilia sighed, shaking her head. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine. I understand there’s a lot going on. What happened here?”

She rubbed her forehead. “I found out about Hayley’s pregnancy. We talked. I thought it was fine until I went to check on her and realized she was gone. Some clothes were gone too, and so was her car. I panicked and told Hank everything. We tried calling her phone, and she hasn’t picked up. It’s been two days now and not a word. She didn’t even leave a note.”

I combed my fingers through my hair and muttered a curse under my breath. “Do you have an idea about where she might be?”

She shrugged. “I don’t know. Hayley had never mentioned a favorite place or anything like that. Hank is devastated; he hasn’t been able to eat or sleep; we’re both worried sick.”

I sighed deeply, clenching my teeth. “Hank’s right, this is my fault.”

“Partly,” she agreed, not sparing me.

“She’s been different since you left. Feisty, rebellious, depressed.”

I glanced at Cecilia, who had a pitiful expression on her face. “I tried to be there for her, to promise her we’d work everything out, and she left. I’m not cut out to be a parent.”

Scoffing, I shook my head. “You did everything right. It’s me. I made her feel like she couldn’t talk to me at all, left after a fight, put her in a position to lie to her dad. Hank hates me. God … and I’m supposed to be a father?”

She smiled weakly. “Hank doesn’t really hate you. He just needs some time to come to terms with this, but if you show him that you’ll be there for his daughter, he’ll appreciate you.”

I nodded, hoping every word of it was true. “The trouble is finding Hayley.”

Cecilia sighed. “We don’t know what to do. Did she mention anyplace or anyone to you?”

I couldn’t think straight. So many of our conversations blurred together. Finally, I mumbled, “I think we should call the cops.”

Cecilia rubbed the nape of her neck before she paused, looking at me as if something had just clicked in her. “I have a friend at the station. Maybe I could tell him to track her plate – take a look at the CCTV or something.”

“Yeah, anything is better than nothing at this point.”

She nodded, running towards the house.

With a heavy sigh, I moved to take a seat on the porch. My mind weighed heavily with thoughts. There were a million scenarios rushing through my head, and all I could do was hope that Hayley was okay. I felt useless sitting here like this I had little control in the situation.

About an hour later, Cecilia joined me on the porch, a smile on her face.

“Her car was spotted at a motel two towns over.” She handed me a piece of paper with the address scribbled across it.

“Thank you.” I stood, ready to leave.

“Listen, I haven’t told Hank yet. You could go ahead, talk to her and then we’ll come afterwards. Please hurry.”

I nodded. “Thank you. I appreciate it.”

She smiled. “Go get our girl.”

Chapter 17

Hayley

"I know I said I'd be there. I'm having car trouble," I told my friend Enid over the phone.

"I think you should go back. I mean, you can't live at a motel, and I can't get there right now. I wish I could, but your safety is more important," she said, and I knew she was right.

I gnawed my bottom lip. "I didn't leave a note. I haven't answered their calls. I can't handle this alone."

"Do you really think that if you tell Levi, he'll want nothing to do with it?" she asked. "That he won't help you?"

I sniffed, hating all the damn crying. I'd barely gotten three hours away because of my nausea, the car problems, and my crying. "Before we even got together, he made it clear he didn't want a family. If I tell him I'm

pregnant, he'll think I'm trying to trap him."

"I doubt that. If he knows you, he'll know you're just as scared," she whispers, then quietly adds. "Are you sure your dad hasn't called him, though?"

"Why would he?"

"Because you're technically a missing person. What if your dad *and* Levi already know?"

My brows furrowed. How hadn't I put that together? Panic reared in my belly, threatening to force out the crackers I'd eaten earlier.

"I know it's really hard, and I wish I could be there with you... but I think you should just go back and speak to your dad. If he chooses not to speak to you, then my door is still open, but at least give it a try."

I groaned. "I just feel like the biggest problem ever. I slept with his best friend, and now I'm pregnant before I even have a job. I'm a disappointment in every way."

"Oh, come on, Hayles, a baby isn't a disappointment, and neither are you," Enid said softly.

“I know, I just …” I touched my still flat belly and cleared my throat. “I know.”

“Well, do you even want this baby?”

My eyes teared at the question. “I do. I thought about all the options, really thought about it, and … and I want this, even if the timing is wrong.”

“Then you have to own it. Start being the parent you want to be for your little one,” she said seriously.

“Yeah,” I mumbled, trying to get more comfortable on the bed.

There was a short silence.

“You love him, don’t you?”

“I-I do,” I said before rolling my eyes. “It’s so stupid. Levi warned me, he told me what we had would be, and I still got attached.”

“You’re only human, Hayles.”

“A lot of good that’s doing me. Levi gets to move on with his life while I remain here a sobbing mess. He hasn’t even called me once since he left – nothing,” I ranted, feeling the emotions bloom inside me.

“Have you given him a chance? Reached out to him? Guys are stupid and always push away what makes them feel, trust me.”

“He’s forty-two, Enid,” I reminded.

She giggled. “There’s no age limit on stupid.”

I laughed with her and sighed. “Maybe you and I should live together and raise the baby. You’d be a good Aunt.”

A knock came at the door, and I interrupted whatever she was saying. “I’ll call you back. I think housekeeping is at the door.”

“Okay, talk to you later.”

I felt better after getting everything out to Enid. She didn’t judge. She offered me hope, supported me, encouraged me. I felt like I had options – finally. Even if I did *have* to go back home.

I twisted the knob and pulled the door open, coming face to face with the last person I expected to see. Seeing Levi, disheveled with a bruise blooming on his jaw gutted all my progress.

“How…?” I breathed.

He took a step forward and pulled me into his arms, my face smashed against his broad chest, the familiar scent of his cologne filling my head. I was shocked, confused and with him hugging me the way he did, I felt like crying.

"I was worried sick," he said. "You scared the hell out of me."

I tore myself away and struggled a few steps back. "What are you doing here? How did you find me?"

"Cecilia has a friend. She agreed on giving me some time with you before she tells your dad you're here," he explained.

I swallowed the lump forming in my throat. "So, you know?"

His gaze dipped to my stomach. "I know," he said, reaching for my hand and leading me towards the bed. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"I just found out, and I needed some time to process. You told me the 'no commitment' rule clearly, so why would I tell you?" I whispered.

Levi's throat bobbed. "You have to have

known I'd be here for you, no matter what."

"You never called after you left; I didn't know anything," I said, torn between anger and tears. "You *left* after giving me emotional whiplash and didn't once reach out. You made it really damn clear we were done."

"I'm sorry. I was still trying to figure out what I felt," he said.

"Yeah, well, you never clued me in, so I figured it out myself."

He looked away, obviously ashamed. I took a breath. "So now that you know everything important, what do you feel, Levi?"

"Happy."

My lips quivered. "You do?"

He smiled. "This was the last thing I expected, but I wasn't angry when I heard; I was actually excited."

I just stared at him, then pushed him away before he touched me. "You're an asshole."

"That's the running agreement," he murmured.

"You could have claimed me weeks ago!

You could have told me you were wrong. You could have told me you were confused but actually cared about me. You could have done a million things before waiting for my dad to call you, punch you by the looks of it, and then run to the rescue like some wannabe hero."

"I know."

"I don't have to let you in. I don't have to accept you. I can push you away, too. I can do this on my own, and maybe I want to!" I insisted.

He stared at me a long time, then sighed. "I missed you, Hayley. I'm sorry I was so terrible, but I would like to prove I can be better to you, that I *want* to be better for you. If you're willing to give me that chance, I won't fuck it up again."

I laughed amid my tears. "I can't believe this is happening."

"I know," he agreed softly, looking as lost as I felt.

"What are we going to do now?" I asked, too exhausted to keep being angry.

"Whatever you want to do. I want to be

a part of this baby's life, and I want to be with you, if you'll let me."

I gnawed my bottom lip, still not sure I was willing to forgive him. We'd spent a week together. We could just be setting ourselves up for fighting and failing. But then another knock came, and I froze, looking at Levi.

He eased up and glanced at his watch. "That must be your dad."

I felt paralyzed, but when Levi reached for my hand and squeezed it gently, I felt a tad better. He cleared his throat. "This is on me more than you, Hayley. I will make sure you're okay, no matter what it takes."

I moved stiffly towards the door, feeling a bit calmer with Levi behind me. When I opened the door, I saw my dad. He was about to move towards me but paused when his eyes shifted to Levi in the back, a scowl replacing the hope there.

"You son of a bitch!" he exclaimed.

"Dad, please!" I pleaded, blocking his path so he wouldn't get to Levi.

His gaze shifted to me; he looked at me as if I'd just betrayed him.

“He will drop you as soon as he gets tired of you, Hayley. You deserve better than this flighty coward, and I won’t let you put yourself or your baby in that position. I know who he is,” Dad snarled, his venom aimed at Levi and Levi only.

“Seems you don’t know me well enough then, my friend,” Levi retorted from behind.

“You lost the right to call me that when you took advantage of my daughter!” he spat.

“Dad, Levi didn’t take advantage of me!” I said. “Everything that happened between us, I agreed to and encouraged. It was both of us.”

His face was marred with a look of disgust that made my stomach churn. “How could you do this to me?”

Fuck this. “How could you keep me in the house, chained to the life you had planned out for me? The rules, the clothes, the limits! Levi was with me for one week, and I experienced more of life than I did for twenty-one years! I’m not going to apologize for finally snatching the reins from you and living the way I’ve wanted to.”

He seemed taken aback by my words. His eyes welled with tears, and I almost felt guilty, but this was something he needed to hear. Before either one of us said anything else, he bolted from the door and left. My legs almost gave out, but Levi caught me, rubbing my back in slow motions.

"It's fine, he'll come around. He just needs some more time," he reassured. "He loves you, Hayley. It's just too much for him to process."

Chapter 18

Hayley

Levi laid with me on the bed until I'd fallen asleep. I woke up in his arms. I didn't want to believe it. That Levi could be this man. A part of me was doing cartwheels, dizzy with joy, the other part was terrified he'd leave again.

I turned to face him and realized he wasn't asleep. He smiled when he saw me. "Hello, sleepy head."

"How long have I been asleep?"

"Quite some time. It's late now."

I adjusted, keeping him from touching me. "Why are you still here?"

"I want to be. I want to be with you, Hayley. I've been doing a lot of thinking in unfun ways, re-evaluating my life, what I want, my future – all because of you. Every single future I want has you in it."

"Are you sure of that?" I asked, my tone

firmer than I thought. “So, if I asked you to take me and our baby to New York? To support me, to raise this child with me, you’d say …”

“I was hoping you’d say that,” he said, a grin on his face.

I stared at him, not sure how to feel. Any bit of hope felt dangerous. “I don’t know if I can trust you. I don’t know if you’ll tell me to forget it after we have sex.”

“Then no sex,” he answered, despite the fact he was hard. “If you want to move to New York and be nothing more than a roommate, if you want to start at square one, date, make me wait nine weeks before you let me touch you, fine. All that matters is you.”

I swallowed the lump in my throat. “I hate that you waited six weeks to say that.”

“I’m more sure of it now than ever, Hayley. I’m sorry I had to catch up to you. I’m sorry I made you wait. I’m sorry that I asked you to forget a single damn thing,” he said, gently stroking my face.

I was a blushing mess. I leaned in to kiss him on his soft lips that I’d missed so much.

He kissed me back with so much relief, so much tenderness that I couldn't doubt a single word. "No more waiting. Not for anything."

"Are you sure? I can order food, and we can talk more, we can go someplace nicer, we can-"

I kissed him quiet, threading my fingers through his hair and pulling him against me. I needed everything he offered right now, to be sure it was real, we were real, *this* was real.

Levi trailed his hands along my sides and down my legs, hooking the hem of my dress in his hand and pulling it over my head. His hand caressed my hips, sliding over my ass before he slipped them beneath my panties to grind me against him.

"We can go slow," he said against my mouth. "I'll kiss every inch of you, remind you why you chose to be mine."

"Only if you swear you'll never say something you don't mean again," I sighed.

His brow furrowed. "That's already understood. You don't have to barter to get that."

"Then have me like we need, Levi. No

restraint, no rules," I encouraged.

He guided me down onto the bed, kissing down my body as his hands roamed, memorizing me. He spread my legs and rubbed me through my panties before prying them off me. I pulled his shirt off him and snapped his boxers against his hip.

Levi gave me a playful growl. "You are feisty."

"Can you handle it?"

He grinned and worked his fingers between my legs, stroking my clit before working two inside me. His thumb continued flicking over my sensitive bud until my back arched.

"I know just how to handle you, angel," he promised.

He dipped his head and licked over my nipple before sucking it into his mouth. My back arched a little off the bed, the area between my legs throbbing with need. He moved his fingers faster, curling them, tapping my G-spot, driving me insane.

"I missed you so much," he said, taking the other breast in his mouth and giving in the same treatment as he'd given the first.

His fingers pushed me into my first orgasm,

but it wasn't enough, not when I knew everything else he could offer.

"Levi, if I don't have you now, I think I'm going to lose my mind," I said, trailing my hands down his toned body, trying to pull his cock from his boxers.

He slid off the bed as he slowly undressed and took off his boxers. "I'm yours, Hayley. Since the day you kissed me."

I reached for him, pulling him back on top of me. As he kissed me, he stroked my hips, lifted them, then he filled me, his hard cock stretching my pussy, pleasure ricocheting through my body.

I sucked in a breath, clinging onto him as he drove himself deep. He released a low grunt, shifting a little to change the angle to something that threatened to ruin every thought in my head.

I kissed him as Levi's body slid against mine, my nipples grazing along his slightly hairy chest, adding to the arousal that already threatened to topple me over.

Levi's movements became more frantic, each stroke deep and hard. I dug my fingers

into his back, dragging them down to mark him. He groaned and bit my throat, my jaw, places he'd ruled out since the marks would be seen. Finally, finally, we were out of hiding.

"Fucking hell, I'm a lucky man," he groaned against my breasts. "You're more than an angel, you're a goddess."

My pussy quivered with every punishing thrust. I screamed as a bolt of pleasure rippled through me, and I knew I couldn't last a second longer.

Just then, Levi pried himself off me and brought himself into a kneeling sort of position – our bodies still joined. He held my legs apart and started to thrust into me harder and faster, his eyes focused on where his cock buried into my pussy.

Just as I tried to pry myself up to look at what he was doing to me, my orgasm crashed into me. My muscles tightened, and I held onto Levi as if he were my only salvation. I chanted his name, arched against him, tried to steal every drop of ecstasy I could and savored the moment.

Levi grunted, and I felt the warmth of

his seed inside me. But then he pulled out and lay next to me, kissing me, petting me, showing no sign of leaving, no sign of rejecting my attempts to cuddle.

He rubbed over my stomach with one hand and cupped my face in the other.

"I love you, Hayley," he murmured.

"You do?" I asked softly.

"I think I have for a long time. I think I *knew* it when you yelled at me, when I experienced jealousy for the first time, but I'm never going to let either of us forget it now," he answered.

I blinked, trying to see his face through my teary eyes. "I love you too. So much."

He pulled me into his arms and kissed the top of my head.

**

The next day, I went back to the house to pack a few things in preparation to head to New York with Levi. I knew my dad wouldn't see reason anytime soon – if ever – and I just

couldn't be here, holding my breath and cowering until he came around. I loved him, but I also knew I needed to experience things without him by my side, without him telling me what to do and how to do it.

Still, the house loomed large. Levi gave me an encouraging nod from the rental car. I'd told him I wanted to do this by myself and didn't want to further anger my father by having him in the house.

With that little encouragement, I entered the house. Cecilia was the first person I saw. Her head swiftly moved towards me, her eyes widening. She bounded from the sofa and ran towards me, a huge smile on her face.

"Ah, it's so good to see you!" she said, hugging me.

"You, too, I'm sorry I freaked and left. I was supposed to meet with Enid, and then I would have called, but I had car trouble."

"I'm just glad you're safe, Hayley. That's all that matters," she insisted.

I looked around the house. "Is Dad here?"

"He went out for a bit to get some

things, but he should be back soon," she informed.

"Oh, I just came to get my things. I'm moving to New York with Levi."

Her well-manicured brow shot up. "Oh, you are?"

"Yeah, it'll be better for everybody given the situation, and … it's time I leave this town," I said, sounding more confident than I felt.

She nodded. "I get that. You deserve to be happy and to live your life the way you want, Hayley."

"Thanks."

She rubbed my arm. "If you need any help, I'm here."

"Thanks, Cecilia – not only for how kind you've been to me but for also helping Levi find me. I really appreciate it."

"Well, I'm always a sucker for a great love story." She laughed lightly. "And I want you to have everything, Hayley. Really. You deserve the world, so go conquer it."

I hugged her again, tightly. "You're the

best stepmom I could hope for."

**

Sometime later, I was in my room packing my clothes and every other necessary thing I needed. I didn't expect to feel so sad while I did it. I was a little scared and the dawning newness, leaving my dad, leaving everything I knew, was so much to process.

I didn't even realize I was crying until I felt the tickle of tears running down my face.

The door creaked, and I glanced back to find my dad standing there. I got up, cleared my throat and brushed the tears from my face. "Hi."

He looked behind me at my suitcase and my messy open drawers. "So, you're leaving, huh?"

"Levi and I agreed it'd be better," I said.

He raised his brow, nodding. He was calmer this time, which I appreciated. "You're old enough to make your own decisions. I just ... I know that, Hayley. I'm not going to stop

you."

"Dad…"

He took a step towards me. "Look, I don't want to fight. I actually got to thinking after … the motel, and I've come to realize you're right. I haven't let you live enough, and I've held on too tight. I just don't feel ready to lose you, and …well, I could have been a better dad."

"You're a great dad."

"All I've ever wanted is for you to be happy and get the best this world has to offer. I didn't realize I was keeping that from happening, and I'm sorry, sweetheart." His voice broke at the end, stirring up the tears from inside me.

"Oh, Dad," I cried as I moved towards him and hugged him. The embrace lingered until my hands were sweaty.

He broke free afterwards, his eyes glossy with tears. "When your mom passed, I didn't want you to feel like you lost anything and went a little overboard. But I can take a backseat to this new chapter of life. I want you to know you have my full support."

“You don’t know what that means,” I said as I embraced him once again.

We talked for a while longer before it was time to leave. My dad walked me to the car where Levi was. I could see how much Levi perked up when he saw us moving towards him, and I couldn’t help but smile. He immediately got out of the car to help me with my luggage and to address my dad.

“I don’t know if our friendship will ever be the same, but you make my daughter happy and that’s all that matters to me. You take care of her and my grandchild,” he said, stretching forth his hand.

Levi took it with a firm grip. “I will.”

He mustered a smile and turned towards me. We shared one last hug before Levi and I hopped in the car and drove away, leaving my dad behind in the rearview.

My lips quivered. Levi reached across and held my hand, offering me a smile.

This was it; this was the beginning of *my* forever.

Epilogue

Hayley

6 months later

I stood on the balcony, overlooking the beautiful city around me. Though it was early in the morning, there was still ongoing traffic, the impatient honking of cars as they fought to move faster through the tight roads.

A hand crept over my large belly, and I closed my eyes, leaning back into him and welcoming Levi to kiss my temple.

“Good morning,” I said.

He continued to rub his hands along my tummy. “Good morning, my sweet wife. You’re up early.”

I turned to him, feasting on the sight of his beautiful face. “Yeah, little man here wouldn’t stop kicking,” I said, glancing down at my swollen stomach. “He’s eager.”

That put a huge smile on Levi's face. "I think he's ready to come out."

"Oh no, he has to wait. There's still plenty to do before he joins us," I said, getting a kick from my little one.

"We really need to get out of the apartment and move into the new house. You've be stalling," he raised a brow, that smile still on his face.

I gave him a guilty smile. "I just love this – I love waking up and hearing the city."

"We won't be far from the city," Levi pointed out.

"I know, I know," I said as I turned back to watch the view. "I still can't believe it took this long for me to get here. I feel like it's all brand new."

"Good. Don't let the magic escape," he purred, kissing me softly.

"Mmm, don't get us started. I'm meeting Enid for lunch," I informed while pushing on his chest. "I'll come home and sort out some of the paperwork at the gallery after."

Levi spun me around, so I was facing him. "You know all that can be put on pause,

right? All you need to do is rest, bark orders at me from the couch or bed, and live your best life."

He'd been so supportive of everything through the pregnancy. We've gone to Lamaze classes together, he's gotten up at three in the morning to get whatever food I was craving, he's massaged my feet, my back, and never once let me feel anything but beautiful.

"You spoil me too much," I hum, kissing him again. "But I can handle finances. I still want to work. We talked about that."

He pulled me into the apartment with him. "I know, I know. I just don't want you to overwork or exhaust yourself."

"I'm not, I promise," I said, kissing him lightly on the lips. "Anyway, that's your job."

He gave me a playful growl. The pregnancy hadn't slowed down our sex life much either. Levi was gentler with me, but there was nothing lacking between us, that was for sure. When he'd told me he wanted to commit, I expected plenty of obstacles, but he was doing everything and more.

When we did fight, I'd catch him

looking up ways to help us online, how we could bond, communicate better, things he could do for me. For a man who swore he'd never settle down, he was remarkably good at being a husband.

I smiled. "I should call my dad, too. Can you believe they're on another vacation?"

Levi grinned. "I actually can't. Cecilia's really talked some sense into him."

"Yeah, he's happy, but I'm just glad he understands now what I felt."

"I'm sure they'll be here the second our son is," Levi hummed before flashing a huge grin. "I can't wait to be a dad."

"You're going to be wonderful," I promised, knowing that he'd been more nervous about it lately. He filled plenty of time with parenting books. "An amazing husband and a wonderful father. Who knew you were the perfect man."

"You ... even before I could see it," he hummed.

I kissed him again, ready to get a snack, but Levi pulled me back, kissing me slowly, deeply, cupping my cheeks in his hand so

there was only us.

"I love you," he said, his hazel eyes burning through me again.

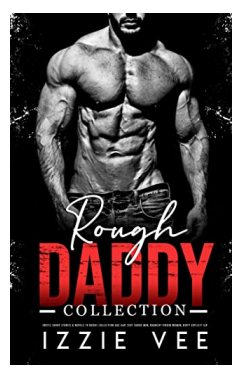
I still got that fluttery feeling in my stomach every time. "I love you too."

KNOW ABOUT MY 10 BOOKS for 1 MEGA DEAL?

Only $2.99 or Free for KU & Prime Members for my 10 Books Collection

Each book is sold for $2.99 individually. A no-brainer deal. Grab yours.

10 BOOKS COLLECTION



CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD

AN EXTRA STEAMY 10 BOOKS BOX SET

Get the first 10 stories in this series in one quick download.

These stories are insta-love, fast paced standalones that can be read in any order. All are extremely steamy and have a HEA ending.

Some of the themes are age-gap/older man younger woman romance, enemies to lovers, bully romance, grumpy boss, huge mountain man and more ...

List of stories inside:

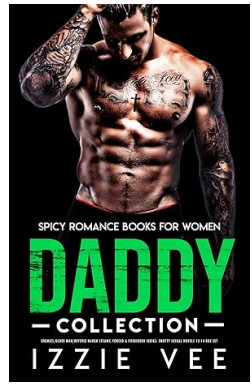
1. Daddy's Taboo Family-Friend.
2. Possessive Alpha-Daddy
3. Daddy's Bully-Heir
4. Off-Limits Coach Daddy
5. Daddy's Little Birthday Girl
6. My Roommate's Sexy Daddy
7. Huge Mountain Daddy
8. Grumpy Christmas Mountain Man
9. MC Daddy Possessive Biker
10. Big Brother's Quarterback Friend.?

Grab your copy HERE

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN GET BOOKS 12-14 IN THIS SERIES FOR ONLY 0.99 CENTS? YES!

Or **FREE** *for KU & Prime Members*

BOOKS 12-14 DEAL



CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD

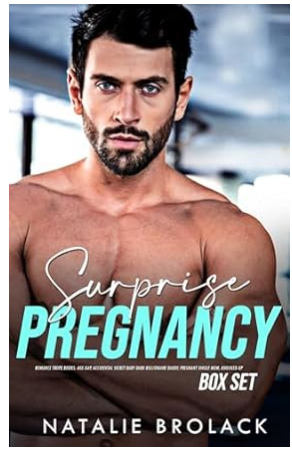
Ready to devour these yummy stories, then one-click now to steam up your Kindle all night long

This collection contains the following stories:

BOOK 1: Pregnant for Daddy's Enemy
BOOK 2: Best-Friend's Billionaire Daddy in Italy
BOOK 3: Daddy's Hot-Friends: Reverse-Harem
PLUS a Special Bonus story for you.

Grab your copy HERE

Like Surprise Pregnancy Romance stories? Great, you can get 3 Surprise Pregnancy stories for just **$0.99** or ***download it for free*** if you are a Kindle Unlimited or Prime Member? This amazing deal is ***over 750 pages***. Get this awesome deal below ^_^



CLICK HERE TO GET THE DEAL

HIS BABY IS GROWING INSIDE ME.

This is a steamy collection of novels all containing the theme surprise/accidental pregnancy. One-click now to steam up your Kindle all night long!

The novels inside are:
BOOK 1: Knocked up My Brother's Bride
BOOK 2: Pregnant by Daddy-Dom
BOOK 3: Pregnant for Daddy's Enemy

Other themes in this collection are Age-Gap, Forbidden Romances, Enemies to Lovers, Grumpy Billionaire Boss & more …

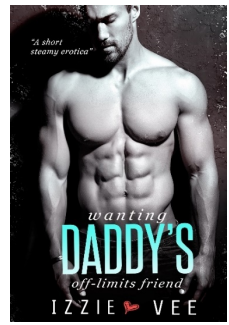
All stories are standalone pregnancy romances and contain an HEA.♡

CLICK HERE to download and enjoy!

Let's connect.

Get this book for **FREE** when you sign up for our newsletter.

WICKEDLY STEAMY & FILTHY!



CLICK HERE TO GET FOR FREE

SAMPLE

I couldn't believe that I was about to head off to college and never had a sexual experience in my life. The person I considered my boyfriend in my senior years of high school was initially the person I thought I would take the big step with but later found that he only had one intention in mind, and that was to fuck the only girl in our year who was rumored to still be a virgin – me. It had hurt, and I had broken off the relationship with a few heated words thrown at him but later realized there wasn't much I wanted out of the relationship either rather than sex.

I didn't want to be a virgin anymore, so I picked the boy that had given me the most attention and decided that he was the one. Unfortunately, he wasn't and here I was, about to head off to college with my hymen intact.

If it were only based on desire alone, then my dream guy would be the one who came over to my house every now and then with all his charm and kindness. He was the first crush I ever had, but I knew there was nothing I could make of the relationship considering he was my father's best friend.

Connor was everything I wanted in a man; he was sweet, kind, caring, incredibly handsome, and packing for his age. He taught gym at the college that I was accepted into, which made my excitement all the more profound. Dad said that Connor would be there to look out for me as he had always done, and I … ***To continue reading get your FREE DOWNLOAD HERE.***